

JANUARY 1962

Commentary

A Debate on The QUESTION of CIVIL DEFENSE

Herman Kahn

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Michael Maccoby

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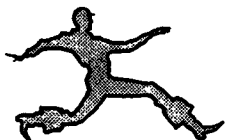
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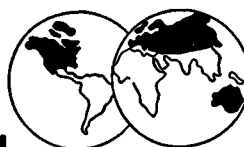
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JANUARY 1962

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A Debate on THE QUESTION OF CIVIL DEFENSE

HERMAN KAHN

ERICH FROMM & MICHAEL MACCOBY

In the hope of contributing to a clarification of the whole question of civil defense by bringing into focus the precise points of disagreement between the two main contending positions, we invited HERMAN KAHN (perhaps the leading advocate of a more intensified civil defense effort) and ERICH FROMM (who has become one of America's most influential spokesmen for disarmament and whose collaborator in the present debate, MICHAEL MACCOBY, has been a prominent participant in the peace movement) to argue their respective cases for the readers of COMMENTARY. The two articles that follow were written independently, though the authors of course had access to each other's previously published statements.

HERMAN KAHN's *On Thermonuclear War* has, since its appearance in 1960, earned itself a secure place among the most controversial books of our time. Formerly on the staff of the RAND Corporation, Mr. Kahn is now director of the Hudson Institute (a non-profit research organization concerned with problems of national security and international order). His new book, *Thinking About the Unthinkable*, is scheduled for publication in the spring by Horizon Press. ERICH FROMM, the distinguished psychoanalyst and social critic, has recently been devoting much of his time to the study of the current international crisis (which forms the subject of his latest book, *May Man Prevail?*). MICHAEL MACCOBY holds a Ph.D. in social psychology from Harvard and has taught both at Harvard and Chicago.

Herman Kahn: Nuclear war may be unthinkable, but it is not impossible. Obviously first priority ought to be given—and is being given—to the objective of deterring or otherwise avoiding a nuclear war. But because war is not impossible, we also have an obligation to allocate at least a modest proportion of our intellectual and material resources to the objective of alleviating the potential results of a nuclear conflict, in the event that one should occur. The fact that this is only a second-priority objective does not mean—as some people seem to think—that it is unimportant or that we have any cause to neglect it.

Of the many measures that the United States has been taking to reduce the harm that we might suffer in consequence of a nuclear war—measures intended not only to save lives and property, but also to facilitate recuperation—civil defense was until very recently underemphasized almost to the point of negligence. A much greater degree of attention has been paid to improving our active defense (anti-missile and anti-aircraft systems), to strengthening our strategic forces, and to developing a more adequate system of Command and Control (including preparations to limit or terminate a war). To be sure, these measures also contribute to the

double aim of saving lives and property and facilitating recovery, but they need to be complemented by an intelligent shelter program and a careful series of plans designed to cope with the medical, economic, social, and political problems that might arise in a postwar world. Indeed, if one evaluates our over-all military posture by its ability to protect people and property in the event of a nuclear war, it becomes clear that civil defense now deserves increased emphasis relative to the other things we have been doing.

In considering civil defense against nuclear weapons, we enter a field which is, in a critical sense, new: there is no adequate experience; no one has fought and survived more than a comparatively small and one-sided nuclear war. If, therefore, we wish to understand what the existence of these weapons of unprecedented destructiveness may mean for us, we have no choice but to rely on theoretical analysis and extrapolation, while trying to relate our theories as closely as possible to the known facts and lessons of the real past. So self-evident is this statement that it would hardly be worth making, except for the fact that a great many people regard nuclear war as "unthinkable" and refuse to think about it at all.

This refusal to "think about the unthinkable" takes a variety of forms, among them a primitive escapism (pretending that the terrible danger we are living under simply does not exist), the construction of a crude mirror-image ("I don't want to hurt anyone—why should anyone want to hurt me?"), and even a deliberate overestimation of the horror of war that acts to justify a feeling of hopelessness and apathy. I must admit, a bit reluctantly, to believing that even many of the "realistic" and sophisticated objections to civil defense that have been made by its opponents stem from roughly the same escapist motives. Nevertheless these objections have been put forward with great force and intensity; they deserve to be confronted and analyzed as arguments, what-

ever the motives of the objectors may or may not be. On what, then, do the opponents of civil defense base their case?

According to one prominent school of thought, there can be *no* effective defense against a thermonuclear attack, and therefore a program of shelter-building and other preparations for survival involves a waste of money and energy that might better be spent on "waging the peace," or, alternately, on improving our deterrent and our capability for waging limited war. A second school of thought opposes civil defense for exactly the opposite reason, arguing that our preparations for survival might become *so* effective that the Soviet Union would regard them as "provocative"; they would thus lead to an acceleration of the arms race or even to a Soviet attack. Nor do some opponents of civil defense rule out the possibility that we ourselves might launch a surprise attack if we were sure that we had effective protection against retaliation.

Though it would seem logically impossible to combine the view that civil defense is ineffective with the idea that it is too effective, some of its opponents reconcile the two positions by assuming the worst: either we or the Soviets will launch an attack out of the belief that civil defense makes a difference, and it will then turn out that the belief was unfounded.

Still another school of thought (mostly, but not completely, composed of certain conservative groups and some military officers) rejects civil defense because it is a form of Maginot-mindedness—that is, because it is defensive rather than offensive: "Brave men do not hide in holes." Until recently these groups made up the most effective opposition to shelter programs. While, by and large, they have backed down somewhat (probably as a result of the Berlin crisis and through a sort of "right-wing" reaction to the extremism of the "left-wing" criticism of civil defense), they still probably constitute the most important political and bureaucratic opposition to increases in civil defense.

BEFORE THE main arguments outlined above are analyzed, one important point should be made clear: that civil defense is indeed likely to be ineffective in contributing to three major objectives. First of all, it cannot *reliably* hold casualties and property damage to "classical levels"; in fact, it is almost prohibitively difficult to give any great degree of protection to concentrated populations in target areas from a surprise attack directed at them. Second, civil defense cannot, by and large, contribute directly to the conduct of military operations, and third, it cannot contribute very much to deterring a Soviet attack.

If we go back to the First and Second World Wars, we find that civil defense functioned as an integral part of the war effort; the ability to mobilize men and materials after the war started was crucial to victory. Civilians, therefore, represented a second line of defense. They supplied men, materials, and morale to the fighting forces. A thermonuclear war, however, changes the situation entirely. Almost (but not all) strategists today believe that it is impossible—even by heroic achievements in civil defense—to mobilize the civilian society to contribute to a significant military effort after a thermonuclear war has started, if the enemy tries to prevent it. For one thing, a thermonuclear war is unlikely to last longer than thirty days, and it may even last as little as thirty minutes—hardly enough time for the operation of a "post-attack mobilization base." Thus, the fact that we can give some protection to a factory worker or a machine tool or a mine or even a city would not, on the whole, make the Soviets fear the United States any more than if we could provide no protection at all.

For this reason, cities (with a few possible exceptions) cannot be considered high-priority military targets in a thermonuclear war, as they were in World War II. On the contrary, there is good reason to believe that any first strike would be aimed at the capacity to retaliate, and that

cities would not only be secondary targets, but might well be deliberately spared.* If we were ever to bomb Russian cities, we would be bombing them because we wanted to punish the Soviets; we would be bombing them for reasons of malevolence or reprisal and not because they were military targets. (The Soviet planners, in my opinion, would to some extent agree with this judgment from their side; or if not, it is likely that they will soon come to accept a similar conception.)

But the case for civil defense need not rest either on the degree to which it can contribute to the war effort or on its capacity to strengthen our ability to deter a Soviet attack. It is not the purpose of civilians to protect the military. People are ends, not means. Therefore the main question is: Can civil defense be used to give a worthwhile degree of protection to lives and property and to facilitate recuperation after a war is over? The answer to this question, under many plausible circumstances, is undoubtedly Yes. Taking ade-

* I have discussed the different kinds of thermonuclear war at length in my book *On Thermonuclear War* and in my testimony (August 6, 1961) before the Holifield Committee. One of the most important distinctions depends on the target system the enemy chooses for his first strike. These can be characterized very roughly as:

1. Countervalue (attacks against people and property);
2. Countervalue + counterforce (attacks against people and property and also against retaliatory forces; i.e., bombers and missiles);
3. Straight counterforce (SAC, ICBM's, Polaris, etc., are the only objective);
4. Counterforce + "bonus" (people and property are included as secondary targets whenever they can be hit without distracting from the primary military objectives);
5. Counterforce + avoidance (people and property are carefully avoided where possible and only military objectives are aimed at).

Only numbers 3 and 5 seem to be rational for the attacker (who would then try to use the cities as hostages either to intimidate or to try to force his opponent to negotiate), but any of these attacks could occur. Even the simplest civil defense programs would be extremely effective in the last three cases (keeping casualties in the 1-25 million range instead of the 10-100 million). Quite elaborate programs, however, might fail to protect much more than half the population in the first two cases.

quate measures now could save the lives of forty million men, women, and children and reduce enormously the medical and genetic after-effects of a war. To be sure, in most situations forty million of the survivors' fellow citizens would not have been saved, but this is no reason for needlessly condemning an additional forty million people to death or neglecting those measures which could certainly diminish the other harmful effects of a war. In an even grimmer situation, civil defense could save the lives of as many as a hundred million people, and under some not improbable conditions civil defense could keep casualties down to one or two million. It could also mean that the nation would recuperate in five years instead of twenty, or in twenty rather than a hundred. In this sense, civil defense can be considered at least partially effective against most forms of nuclear attack that we can now anticipate, and extremely effective in certain special cases that could very well arise if our programs for avoiding war should fail in their purpose. And since there is always a chance that these programs may fail, we have an inescapably compelling reason—which is at once moral and political—at least to examine, and very likely to take, the steps that would reduce death, suffering, and destruction as much as possible.

ON WHAT GROUNDS do those critics of civil defense who call it ineffective base their judgment? One argument often advanced is that civil defense is ineffective because the long-range physical consequences of a thermonuclear war would make life impossible for the survivors, assuming that there were any. Now, it is true that—according to the best scientific estimates—the postwar environment would be more hostile to human life for some ten thousand years. However, objective studies also indicate that this environment would not be so hostile as to preclude, at least in the long run, decent and useful lives for the survivors and their descendants.*

People in the postwar world would for a time have to get by on a standard of living far below the one we consider necessary in the United States today. We must remember, however, that our standard today is far higher than the mere preservation of life would require.[†] Even more to the point, the present standard of public health in America could be dropped without catastrophic consequences. For example, though much of the food supply in the postwar world would be contaminated by Strontium 90, much of it could still be used without necessarily causing death or even serious illness—and even more of it could be used if preparations were made in advance to combat contamination.

Under such conditions, the average individual would run somewhat greater risks of various types of disease and greater risks of having genetically deformed children, but statistically these risks would not be so much larger than those normally run today. Thus—to take the case that most horrifies people when confronted by the idea of a thermonuclear war—the percentage of children born with serious genetic defects might go up, after a war big enough to have exposed the survivors to

* Indeed what evidence there is suggests that relatively normal and happy lives would not be impossible even under the relatively harsh conditions that might prevail after a nuclear war, and in spite of the personal and social traumas that would have been experienced. This assertion seems to arouse the utmost hostility in many people, yet it is as well documented a conclusion as many that we have in this uncertain field, and substantially better documented than the opposite view. (See for example *Air War and Emotional Stress* by I. L. Janis, or the series of studies on disasters and their aftereffects by the Disaster Research Group of the National Academy of Sciences—National Research Council.) It should be clear that to say that suffering would be great but not unlimited, or even to say that one would recover in some sense, is neither to advocate such suffering nor to view suffering callously.

[†] Studies that have been done (mainly by RAND, the Stanford Research Institute, and OCDM) indicate that after the first year or so, assuming there is a successful reorganization, the standard of living (including life expectancy and probability of a normal birth) would be higher than the standards prevalent in the U.S. between 1900 and 1930.

an average dose of 250 roentgens,* from the present level of about 4 to an estimated 5 per cent. It can, of course, be said that this is an intolerably large increase; even one more deformed infant is too many. One can hardly disagree with that proposition. Yet the fact remains that life would still go on. People, after all, have lived under far worse conditions than we are accustomed to in this country today, not only throughout most of human history, but even in vast areas of the contemporary world. To argue that an effort to save people's lives is useless because life would not be worth living in the postwar world is tantamount to saying that people should not be saved because they would have to endure a lower standard of living and a lower standard of health. It is hard to think of any other equally preposterous proposition that serious men are still willing to back.

It is curious, moreover, that those who are most pessimistic in their estimate of the consequences of a nuclear war are generally to be found among the opponents of civil defense. If one believes that a thermonuclear war would be so horrible as to make life for the survivors more difficult than it has ever been in the whole of human history, then it would seem that one is all the more obligated to take measures that might ease the lot of the survivors rather than abandoning them to their fate.

CIVIL DEFENSE, THEN, is not rendered ineffective by the long-range physical consequences of a thermonuclear war. Nor is it likely to be rendered ineffective by the psychological consequences that some observers have claimed would follow from the traumas of such a war. One must recognize that for most people deep grief is alleviated by time, that people do recover in large part from tragedies, that life does go on. In fact, the detailed map exercises that have been made by students of nuclear war lead to the conclusion that most survivors would not go through as horrible a set of personal experiences as many Rus-

sians, Germans, Poles, Yugoslavs, Japanese, and others did in World War II. These people have been left with deep emotional scars, yet few of them now feel they would be better off dead; most are leading "normal and happy" lives.

None of this is to imply that we do not have good sound technical reasons for worrying about the effectiveness of civil defense. Any man today who says that we, as a nation, can survive a thermonuclear war is saying something very complicated. He is saying that we can handle *all* of the problems—military, social, political, economic, and medical—that would arise from a thermonuclear war; not merely some, but all. Furthermore, he is assuming that a civil defense program would be functioning on the day the war started and that it would not have been rendered obsolete between the time it was designed and the time it was completed. As I have pointed out above, many different kinds of thermonuclear war might conceivably occur. The worst kind—a surprise attack out of the blue directed against population—presents a virtually impossible problem of defense for those in target areas. But our weakness in the worst case (the very case on which opponents of civil defense like to dwell) does not settle the issue. For one thing, a surprise attack out of the blue directed against population is the least likely of all the possibilities. For another thing, programs which are designed to meet less ferocious and more likely wars (e.g., a "straight counterforce" attack which ignores cities and aims only or mainly at strategic capability) can still accomplish something; even in the worst case there is still a difference, after all, between 180 million dead and 90 million dead. One should not lightly condemn 90 million people to an unnecessary death by an undemonstrable supposition that nothing can be done to save them.

* This is a reasonable estimate of what might happen, given modest precautions against fallout, in the most likely kinds of war that could occur in the early 60's.

As for the problem of obsolescence, civil defense, like any other military system, must be improved and adapted over time. Actually, obsolescence is less serious a problem for civil defense than for many other military systems because even a civil defense system which has been outstripped by technological developments may nevertheless provide a large degree of protection (depending again on the kind of attack that is made).

Unhappily, it may soon be technologically possible to build (probably in less than ten years and at a cost of something in the neighborhood of \$10 billion) what I have elsewhere called "doomsday machines"—that is, devices which could actually destroy all unprotected people, or perhaps eventually *all* people, for only the most elaborate measures could have any hope of protecting against such devices. However, so far as we know, doomsday machines are not now being built by either side, and there are good reasons for believing that they will not be built in the near future. This is not to say that they will never be built; I am not alone in thinking that there is a serious danger of one or more such weapons being built, in a matter of decades, if we do not first arrive at an adequate system of arms control. Of course, the weapons that already exist give us reason enough to want arms control, while the possibility of doomsday machines gives us no reason whatever to neglect civil defense against the far less destructive weapons that are now or soon will become part of the nuclear arsenal, and those which may be developed in the near future.*

A PART FROM getting a program inaugurated early enough so that if a war should break out we can rely on having a shelter capability in being on the day it starts, there are other problems to be considered in estimating the effectiveness of civil defense and the possibility of the nation's recovering from a thermonuclear war. Would the social organism fall apart

completely—that is, die in some sense—as a result of the tremendous shock it would receive from a large thermonuclear war? Obviously we cannot know for sure. In order to argue that society would reorganize itself after an attack, one must have faith in the ability of people to improvise, to meet emergencies with some intelligence and energy. Faith of this kind is not unreasonable. Insofar as there are historical examples to study (and some of them are close to thermonuclear wars in intensity, e.g., the devastation of Germany and the Soviet Union in World War II)—they provide evidence that people can and do rise to the occasion.

Undoubtedly we are moving here amid vast uncertainties. Many of our suppositions may prove wrong. Given these uncertainties, the advocates of civil defense should not claim too much, and neither should its opponents. It does seem, however, that if there is a reasonable possibility for the survival of society after a nuclear war, a moral obligation is imposed upon us to prepare facilities in advance that would help people to meet the emergencies they would have to face and that would improve their capability for improvising and organizing. That there is such a possibility is indicated by whatever serious studies have been made; these studies are only partial and they are certainly not infallible, but they do give us enough ground for supposing that the survivors of a nuclear war would not meet any objectively insuperable obstacles—especially if they were supported by proper preparations.

* Actually, because of the desire on both sides to procure weapon systems that are relatively invulnerable, the current technological trend is toward less destructive systems. For example, a Polaris submarine carries sixteen missiles with a total yield in the five to twenty megaton region. A B-52 squadron (fifteen planes)—which under current conditions may be a less reliable deterrent—might be capable of carrying ten to fifty times as much yield. The Minuteman missile which replaces the Atlas-Titan missiles is also likely to carry much less yield per missile than its predecessor.

What do such preparations consist of? Among the most important are those designed to cope with immediate survival needs and to maintain or restore economic momentum. Plans must be made so that enough food, water, shelter, and clothing will be available immediately after an attack. That means having sufficient stocks on hand to last until production can begin again, and preparing schemes and facilities for distributing these stocks under the many different possible circumstances that could arise. One reason for optimism concerning U.S. recovery is that, as certain analyses indicate, enormous stocks of the highest priority items would be left after the kinds of nuclear attacks which might be launched against this country if a war should break out at some point in the early 1960's. For example, according to the best estimates, we would not face starvation even if we were unable to get agriculture going again for a year or two.* To take another example, studies also provide evidence that the national transportation system would continue to work adequately,[†] and that therefore the preparations now being made to distribute food before an attack are not strictly necessary. But since, as I have repeatedly tried to emphasize, these studies are not infallible, it is wise to take out as much insurance as possible against the errors they may contain.

The question of political recovery is more difficult to answer. We live today in a very stable country. It is one of the few countries in the world in which the government does not worry about revolution and subversion as major problems. However, these problems might well exist in the postwar world. Even if we won the war, it is conceivable that we might no longer live in a democracy. But again, if adequate preparations were made, our democratic institutions could probably survive most kinds of thermonuclear war. For some very small wars this is almost certainly true; for others, it is a judgment based on the belief that while the lives and thoughts of all the survivors would be af-

fected by the war, their character structure and value system would probably not be changed in any startling fashion.

On this point it has sometimes been argued that the only survivors of a thermonuclear war would be "backwoods reactionaries" who could not be expected to support the rebuilding of democratic institutions. But the argument is faulty, since it not only exaggerates the difference between urban and rural America but also fails to recognize that many or even most of our cities would survive the likeliest forms of nuclear war that we can anticipate. Yet even if it were true that the cities would all be wiped out, it would still be an indefensible moral position that implied—as this one does—that people who live in the country are less worth saving than those who live in cities.

THIS IS BY NO MEANS as complete a picture as can be drawn, and although the studies that have been made contain many gaps, there is good reason to conclude that civil defense is not completely—or even largely—ineffective. Precisely *how* effective civil defense can be depends on the kind of war that occurs and the kind of programs that are instituted. The recommendation by the Kennedy administration that we spend \$207 million in 1962 for the identification, counting, and equipping of existing shelter space, for the improvement of air-raid warning and fallout detection systems, and for research and development, is both realistic and desirable as a first step. (In fact such a step was recommended in the RAND 1957 civil defense study.) But it is only a first step.

* See "Report on a Study of Non-Military Defense" (RAND Report R-322-RC) and "Post-Attack Farm Problems" (Stanford Research Institute, Part I, December 1960; Part II, October 1961).

† "A System Analysis of the Effects of Nuclear Attack on Railroad Transportation in the Continental United States" (Stanford Research Institute, April 1960) and "Effects of Nuclear Attack on Rail Activity Centers" (Stanford Research Institute, July 1961).

A reasonable program might involve a gradual build-up from about \$1 billion annually to somewhere in the neighborhood of under \$5 billion annually. An expenditure of that order would buy a valuable degree of protection against most forms of nuclear attack that might occur. The money would be used for the construction of various types of shelter, research and experimentation, educating civil defense cadres, and preparing plans and facilities for post-attack recuperation. But if an ambitious civil defense program should be implemented, it would be important to keep it small enough and to carry it out in a way such that it would be unlikely, by itself, to provoke an accelerated arms race.

THIS BRINGS US to the second set of arguments often used by opponents of civil defense: not that civil defense is ineffective but that it is potentially too effective. The argument is this: If civilians are considered a target, then an attempt to protect them could touch off a greater effort by the Soviets to acquire the necessary power to destroy them even in their protected state. If we build an adequate shelter system, they may then go to heroic efforts to build larger missiles and a greater number of them. Or equally important, if the Soviets fear that our civil defense preparations increase the chances of our striking them in a crisis or in an emergency, they may then have to keep their forces more alert. This could, in turn, make them more accident-prone or trigger-happy. We would then be faced with what is known as a situation of "false preemption" or "anticipatory retaliation." That is, they may strike us because they think that we are going to strike them.

Now, I agree that some of these problems might be raised by a large crash civil-defense program—say, one that was initiated at substantially more than \$5 billion annually. But I do not believe that the kind of program recommended by the present administration—or even a pro-

gram as large as the one advocated here—would greatly affect the arms race.* In order to understand why, we have to consider the psychological aspect of a conflict such as the one we are involved in with the Soviet Union.

There is a widespread feeling that civil defense is a sign of war hysteria and militarism or an admission that war is inevitable, and that it will therefore bring about the very thing we fear: if we build shelters, we will have to use them. In other words, civil defense is an example of the mechanism known as "self-fulfilling prophecy." In the present context, this term—whose original application was somewhat different from the use that is made of it by opponents of civil defense†

* It is very difficult to see how any "aggressive" implications can plausibly be read into the current program. Far from contributing to deterrence, a program of concentrating much of our population in fallout shelters that are vulnerable to blast and thermal effects, makes people ideal hostages for an enemy who deliberately spares them on his first strike. However, very few people who have considered these issues would take the position that the probability of war in the absence of this program is so low that the hypothetical decrease in deterrence is enough to outweigh the savings in life and property in the event of a war.

But there is a more legitimate objection to the \$207 million program currently being carried out. Even though it emphasizes using existing structures as community shelters, there is still a heavy reliance on individual and local community efforts. This leads to all kinds of exhortatory and sometimes inflammatory speeches or exaggerated claims by civil defense enthusiasts, and raises the "Shoot Thy Neighbor" and other divisive problems. A great country ought not to proceed permanently in such a fashion with the business of defending its citizens against the potential hazards of nuclear war.

† The phrase, I believe, was first given wide currency by Dr. Robert K. Merton in an article published in 1948. Merton's concern was with how the treatment of ethnic out-groups by ethnic in-groups sometimes acts to bring about the very characteristics condemned in the original stereotypes. He tried to outline the different conditions under which prejudiced prophecies might be defeated rather than fulfilled, and to emphasize that "deliberate institutional controls" could prevent such fears from being translated into reality. Certainly the expectation of hostility from other nations that underlies national defense can have both a self-fulfilling (arms race) and a self-defeat-

—is invoked to refer to situations in which one side acts in a hostile manner because it suspects the other side of hostility; the other side, observing this behavior, responds by acting hostile itself, thus confirming the original estimate made by the first side, which then acts even more hostile and suspicious than before, and so on, until the spiral reaches a very high level of mutual distrust and belligerence.

I think there is no doubt that this process actually does operate both in personal and in international relations. But I also think that when the question is one of civil defense rather than of strategic force (which is a different matter), many of the people who appeal to the “self-fulfilling prophecy” are usually being less rational than superstitious: “thinking makes it so.” They object to civil defense in much the same way that some women will object to an examination for cancer or some men will object to buying life insurance. Yet it is not the examination which brings on the malignancy or the preparation for family security which causes death. On the contrary, it is an indisputable principle of everyday experience that appropriate precautions taken as a result of realistic fears ordinarily help to prevent such fears from being realized. Of course, the operative words here are “appropriate” and “realistic,” and it is on determining what constitutes an appropriate precaution and a realistic fear that we ought to concentrate our minds. Prophecies are not fulfilled magically, but only through communications and reactions that can be identified when they occur. And we may be willing to accept some small costs on the debit side of the ledger if the over-all balance is improved.

ing (deterrent) aspect. Which aspect becomes more important depends entirely on our goals (unilateral disarmament, deterrence unless and until better arrangements can be worked out, bargaining from a position of strength, etc.), on the specific situation, and not least on the type (first-strike capability, second-strike capability, active, civil, etc.) and *quantity* of defense which is under consideration. How much is often as important as what kind.

In short, the problem in launching a civil defense effort is similar to the problem that exists in all our military programs: to find the line above which we cannot go without provoking the Soviets into greatly accelerated efforts. To those of us who are not ready to accept any large degree of immediate unilateral disarmament, this quantitative question is crucial, since even maintaining our current establishment at its present level involves us in the danger of getting caught in a spiralling arms race. It is true that both sides—restrained by economic and social limitations and the knowledge that unreasonable efforts are likely to touch off similar responses on the part of the antagonist—are running neither as fast nor as hard as they could. Consequently, it is of the utmost (though still not overriding) importance to do nothing that could be interpreted as an excessive loosening of self-restraint.

So far as the over-all strategic balance is concerned, I believe that if we desired we could in the short- and medium-run obtain a meaningful and large increase in our “current superiority” over the Soviets (given their technological and economic limitations). However, it is unlikely that this could be done without making the arms race much more dangerous than it already is. Therefore, unless the Soviets force international relations to deteriorate drastically, we should be careful to avoid pursuing an undue degree of increase in the superiority of our over-all strategic force. So far as civil defense is concerned, I would—as I have already indicated—be opposed to current programs at the level of \$5 or \$10 billion a year, despite the fact that in my opinion such larger programs could be justified by an analysis based only on narrow military and economic considerations. The civil defense line probably should be drawn somewhere below \$5 billion annually, and the U.S. should build up to that figure only gradually, so as not to involve itself in too abrupt a change of policy.

THE THIRD ARGUMENT generally advanced by opponents of civil defense is that an American civil defense effort might lead to a preventive war by the Soviet Union (because such a program would convince the Soviets of our aggressive intentions). Alternately, it is asserted that a civil defense program might induce a preventive war by the United States (because by attacking at a propitious moment, we could hold casualties to a few million). Both these arguments seem almost completely incredible. They rest on the notion that unless one can guarantee total annihilation, the other side will not be deterred; that is to say, unless we can promise the Soviets that every single American will be killed in their reprisal, they will worry about a surprise attack against them out of the blue. Yet neither side has shown so great a desire to strike the other as this notion implies. In my opinion, if there were perfect protection for every citizen of both countries, and an invulnerable post-attack recuperation capability to boot, deterrence would still operate under most circumstances; after all, the empty cities—which have such immense historical and cultural significance—would still be hostages. In addition there would be uncertainties in the analysis: who would trust a hypothetical analysis enough to make him press a button in cold blood? But in the more practical case we can ignore these subtleties; no country is going to go to war lightly simply because by doing so it could reduce fatalities from 60 million in a possible future war to, say, 20 million. Twenty million is a very impressive number of people to sacrifice to an estimate of the future course of international politics.

There are, however, circumstances in which certain kinds of civil defense programs might tend to convert an especially tense crisis into a war. Harsh choices can arise. We may have to decide between the risk of immediate war and appeasement or surrender, with whatever that entails in terms of future risks. In such a situation

some kinds of civil defense, in particular evacuation programs, could affect one side's decision or the other's, and thus would increase the risk of immediate war. But we must recognize both that the risk may have to be taken and that having a credible ability to accept that risk may deter the Soviets from deliberately creating the very situation in which it would arise. I would, in fact, conjecture that an appropriate civil defense program might even contribute to a relatively large reduction in the probability of war—by reducing the frequency and intensity of Soviet-inspired crises.

Still another argument that has been made against civil defense is that although it is ineffective, it can fool our leaders and make them more reckless, or it can fool the people who will then become more reckless themselves or allow the government to be. Since I have already set forth my reasons for believing in the effectiveness of civil defense, and since I have already indicated my objections to the notion that a danger of recklessness is involved, there is no need to discuss this argument further. However, it may be worth speculating on why people hold to such positions. The reasons, I think, range from a simple visceral desire to dismiss the whole subject of nuclear war; to a fanatic desire to concentrate all our energies—material and intellectual—on a single “approved” approach (whether this be deterrence, accommodation, or unilateral disarmament) with no insurance for contingencies; to an even more fanatic desire to construct an oversimplified “everybody red or everybody dead” argument.

In short, the critics of civil defense do not want to think about the possibility of a nuclear war actually being fought. They prefer wishing it away, ignoring it, denying its existence as a problem worthy of the most serious thought and consideration. Even professional strategists sometimes do not want to concern themselves with the details of the balance of terror—the obvious possibilities for miscalculation,

unauthorized behavior, accident, or even war by calculation. They do not want to consider these possibilities seriously, in the sense of letting them affect programs. Most such strategists fear that civil defense competes financially with improved deterrent or limited war forces. Many also fear that it will weaken the morale of the civilian population by casting doubt on the capacity of SAC to deter or by making the risks of war seem more urgent and actual. Hence these strategists take refuge in the *automatic* balance of terror—the idea that there can be only one kind of thermonuclear war, a war inevitably involving mutual annihilation, and therefore a war that can never take place. Yet everything depends on how the war may start, how it may be fought, and how it may be terminated. And unless one understands that there is a whole range of possible situations, one cannot fully appreciate the potential effectiveness of the different

kinds of civil defense programs which might be recommended.

IT IS NOT ONLY our first-priority objectives that are essential; there is a long list of things that we cannot safely do without. We need to eat and sleep as well as to breathe, and though human biology permits of no question about which comes first, neither can be ignored indefinitely. Similarly, there is no question that it is far more important to avoid war than to find ways of reducing its damage and of recovering from its effects. But since we cannot be certain that we will succeed in preventing war, it is essential that we take moderate and prudent steps to minimize the disaster that such a failure would mean. In the event of a war, civil defense could not only save millions of lives but could also prove crucial to the continued survival in the world of Western ideals and institutions.

* * *

Erich Fromm & Michael Maccoby Up until 1961 few Americans took the possibility of nuclear war very seriously. Many were convinced that such a war would never occur because it would be too destructive; others did not think about it at all. The change which took place in 1961 was brought about in the first instance by the acute Berlin crisis and President Kennedy's speech of July 25. The President told the nation after his Vienna meeting with Khrushchev that the Soviet leader had threatened to execute his Berlin plans within six months at the most, and since we were resolved not to accept such an ultimatum, the inference was that a thermonuclear war was a definite possibility before the end of the year. The President added in this context that he would announce the steps a citizen could "take without delay to protect his family in the case of an attack," and proposed a new \$207 million shelter program.

The President's speech might not have been so effective had the soil not been pre-

pared by the most vocal and most influential spokesman for civil defense, Herman Kahn, and a number of his colleagues, especially from the RAND Corporation. Mr. Kahn's basic approach can be described as being close to psychoanalysis. Not so much because he makes many statements about psychological matters (such as the quality and duration of grief, the discipline of people during and after a nuclear attack, the capacity to be happy in the post-attack world, etc.), but primarily because his central thesis is that, out of fear, people repress the awareness that thermonuclear war may come, and consequently they ignore the possibilities of defense. Hence in order to enable them to prepare adequately, the thing to do is to make them aware that a thermonuclear war can occur. No psychoanalyst could quarrel with this principle. The question is only whether an awareness that thermonuclear war is actually possible leads to an increased sense of realism or whether, as we believe, old illusions are replaced by

even more dangerous ones. Kahn, whose good will and great ability we do not doubt, has on the whole given the opinion leaders and the political leaders of this country the impression that nuclear war need by no means be catastrophic—that, provided we take the proper steps, the country can recover, and that after ten or twenty years people can once again lead happy and prosperous lives. He has, indeed, qualified this general thesis by many “ifs,” but it is the general thesis that has taken hold, while the qualifications have become the fine print which is forgotten.

There are two conceptions of the role of civil defense and, specifically, of a shelter program. The first—stressed in Kahn’s testimony last August before the Holifield Committee* and also in President Kennedy’s speech of May 25—sees the shelter program as “life insurance,” and argues for it on the ground that it would save many millions of lives. At present the assumption is made that fallout shelters might save not only lives in rural areas, but also in the cities—since it is calculated that the Soviets are not likely to attack our cities. As we shall try to show later, this calculation is quite unwarranted, and the probability is that our urban population would be wiped out in a thermonuclear war. However, since millions of people living in rural areas away from population centers and military installations might be saved by fallout shelters, and since nuclear war is possible or even likely to occur, who would dare to dissuade a family or a community from constructing fallout shelters? We certainly would not.

Quite different from the “insurance” idea is the conception of civil defense as part of our *national strategy*. Many spokesmen for civil defense contend that it will greatly improve our strategic position, that it may help to avert war. We shall try to show: (1) that there are severe limitations to the effectiveness of civil defense; (2) that it is more likely to provoke war than to deter it; (3) that

even if it were optimally successful in war, it would not prevent the replacement of our democratic system by a totalitarian one. If we are right on these points, then even the justification of civil defense as “insurance” may have to be reconsidered. The true situation may be analogous to one in which a man takes out life insurance under conditions that considerably increase the likelihood of his death. In such a case, one might still not try to dissuade him if he wished to buy insurance, but certainly he and his friends would be right to have severe doubts about its usefulness.

THE FIRST and most fundamental limitation of any shelter program is that it could not save our urban population in the event of an attack against our cities. Rather than frankly accepting this fact, Kahn and other advocates of civil defense argue that if the Russians strike first they will try to destroy our missile and SAC bases, *not* our cities. Given such a strike, the greatest danger to those city dwellers fortunate enough to be living well away from strategic centers would be from delayed fallout, and thus fallout shelters might lower the immediate death toll from fifty to ten million people.†

On what grounds do strategists suppose that the Russians would not direct a first strike against our population centers? Kahn, in his book *On Thermonuclear War*, gives several reasons: (1) they have so few missiles that they would have to choose between attacking our military installations *or* our cities, and therefore in order to neutralize our striking power they would choose to hit our military installations; (2) they would not wish to attack

* “Hearings Before a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Government Operations,” House of Representatives, August 1961. All quotations in this article, unless otherwise designated, are from the record of these hearings.

† This calculation assumes a strike with a yield no larger than 3,000 megatons, in spite of the fact that we have the power to launch over 40,000 megatons, and there is no proof that the Russians are behind us.

our cities first, in order to hold them as hostages against our retaliatory strike; (3) "almost nobody wants to go down in history as the first man to kill 100,000,000 people."

The weakness of Kahn's first point lies in its shortsightedness. Since it will take no less than a year for even a minimal civil defense program to bear fruit, calculations ought to be made not on the basis of present Russian missile strength, but on the number of missiles the Soviets may have a year or two from now. In addition, even if they did decide to make our military installations their main target, the Soviets might kill an additional 50 million people by diverting only a fraction of their missile strength to our ten largest population centers. (This is the kind of attack Kahn calls "counterforce plus bonus.") Further, we have so increased our strength in the past year that a successful attack against our bases would no longer cripple our retaliatory power. The Russians would thus be foolish to limit their attack to our military installations, knowing that their own cities would remain as hostages.

As to the second point—that they would avoid hitting our cities in order to hold them as hostages—Kahn imagines that after having destroyed our military bases, they would command us not to strike their cities on pain of having our own cities destroyed in retaliation. But is it realistic to assume that after the destruction of our military installations and the death of ten to fifteen million people, the Russians would expect our government to wait and listen to their demands rather than to use all its strength immediately in a mood of fury and revenge against the Russian cities?

And finally, as for the reluctance of a political leader to go down in history as the first man to kill 100,000,000 people, such considerations did not interfere with the decision to saturate cities with bombs during the Second World War; nor did they restrain the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Why then

should we expect the force of moral considerations to be greater now when the survival of entire nations is at stake?

All this, it should be added, applies only to a first strike by the Russians. *If we were to initiate a first strike*—in retaliation for, say, a Soviet invasion of West Berlin—the Russians would not hit back at our empty bases; clearly, they would attack our cities.

ASSUMING, THEN, that our cities were attacked, what chance of survival would the urban population have? Almost none, given the effects of the megaton weapons. A 20-megaton groundburst leaves a crater 300 feet deep and a half mile in radius, destroying all underground shelters. Within a four-mile radius, the most heavily reinforced concrete structures are leveled. At eleven miles, the blast pressure destroys all conventional frame or brick buildings, and buries most basement fallout shelters, while winds of 160 miles per hour turn hurtling debris and human bodies into deadly missiles.

But blast is the least of the killers in thermonuclear war; fire, instant radiation, and delayed fallout would claim many more lives. Within at least a 25-mile radius of a 20-megaton blast—an area of about 2,000 square miles—any exposed person would die of burns, and raging fires would soon begin to consume the air in fallout and blast shelters.* As long as there was fuel for these fires, they would burn on, unchecked. Even more widespread in its potential effect is the danger of blindness to those above ground at the moment of blast; anyone who glimpsed the explosion would be blinded, for it would emit a light pulse at less than 0.015 second (the time needed for a saving eye-blink).

While in the city itself almost nobody could survive, people living in the suburbs

* In the fire-bombing of Hamburg during World War II, the firestorm caused a ground temperature of 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit in which all exposed humans were incinerated, while those in shelters were asphyxiated or burned.

—even if they escaped these instantaneous effects of blast, flying debris, heat, blindness, and radiation—would still be threatened by delayed fallout. At 25 miles from a 20-megaton explosion one might expect doses of 3,000 roentgens per hour arriving after about twenty minutes—enough to kill a person within two minutes, unless he were in a specially constructed fallout shelter. If he could succeed in reaching a shelter with a large shielding factor within twenty-two minutes after the blast, and if he could avoid glimpsing the fireball, a hard fight for survival would then have only begun.

What about saving the urban population by *evacuation*? While many reject the idea of evacuation, others (including Kahn) consider it a serious possibility. It is hard to see why. If we were to evacuate our cities for every political crisis, we would probably have to leave them empty for several months practically every year. Even if this were feasible (which it is not), after one or two such evacuations no one would leave, for the warning signal would come to be considered a repeated cry of “wolf.” Further, every time we evacuated, we would give the Russians a reason for supposing that we were planning a first strike, and hence the chances of a preemptive attack would increase. As to evacuating cities *after* a warning, fifteen minutes would obviously not be enough time if the Russians struck first. If, on the other hand, *we* wanted to strike first, it would require many hours at the very least to evacuate all our major cities, and since such a move would be impossible to conceal from the Russians, they would obviously not wait for our attack, but would hasten to hit us first. At best we might secretly evacuate our leaders before striking, but how many of them would be willing to leave for safety knowing that their wives and children would soon be killed?

Finally, let us consider the possibility of protecting our urban population by vast underground shelters (which have also been proposed by certain enthusiasts of

civil defense). In the case of a surprise attack it would take more than fifteen minutes to get people down to the streets from big offices and apartment buildings. The panic, and the struggle for elevators, doors, and the like could only result in the same kind of situation that arises in a theater when fire breaks out. Even if there were a shelter entrance not further than five minutes’ brisk walk from any point in the city, it takes little imagination to visualize how many people would be trampled to death before reaching the shelter, and how few—even of the strongest and most brutal—would be saved.

IF EVERYONE in the city and its suburbs is likely to be killed, what are the chances for survival beyond the 25-mile range? Here fallout would be the greatest menace. In some areas—say 50 miles from the blast—it would probably be necessary to remain in a fallout shelter for at least two weeks, and afterward it would be possible to leave it for only a few hours each week. How many people would find themselves in this situation depends on the magnitude of the attack, and on the amount of fallout generated by megaton bombs—something the experts have still not agreed upon. A problem in making any calculation is the lack of studies which outline exact fallout danger at different distances from the blast, or in accordance with various possible attacks. Neither are there sufficient data on the effects of other radioactive particles—for instance Strontium 90, which might make farming impossible anywhere in the country. There are experts who think that many farmlands might require forty replantings before becoming safe again, and no one has disproved this estimate. Norman A. Hananian of the RAND Corporation, who prepared the statistics on heavy attacks used by Kahn in his book, concludes his testimony to the Holifield Committee by stating that “the outcomes of future attacks are anything but precisely predictable. Fallout could create overwhelming

disaster, but it might not. Whether it would depends to some extent on factors we have not examined today—on wind, for example. But it depends most importantly on the kind of war that the potential combatants may be prepared to fight.” What kind of war can we expect? Ralph E. Lapp has written that present Soviet stockpiles are more than adequate for a 10,000 or 20,000 megaton attack, enough to saturate the whole nation with fallout.

Hanunian considers attacks of from 300 to 30,000 megatons, but the latter, as we have just seen, seems closer to Russian capability. In such an attack, with five-sixths of the bombs directed against military targets, Hanunian estimates that even a total fallout shelter system would be unable to prevent from 54 to 85 million people from being killed. What the experts have so far not studied are the *long-range effects* of 30,000 megaton bombings, which might so contaminate the countryside as to leave crops inedible, unstored water undrinkable, and food-giving animals dead from radioactivity. If a 30,000 megaton attack were to take place—as indeed is possible—what would become of Kahn’s optimistic idea of the “B country” (the rural areas and the small towns) rebuilding the “A country” (the 53 major metropolitan areas)?

In summing up our discussion of the limitations of civil defense, let us take a brief look at the possible types of shelter program and try to determine how effective each is likely to be in the event of the kind of war we consider most probable—a war involving attacks on our cities, either directly or as “bonus.”

The effectiveness of the current minimal program of marking and stocking shelter space mainly in urban areas would be most limited—except in the unlikely case that the enemy were to decide against attacking even the ten largest cities.

The next possible program—proposed by Walmar Strobe of the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratories—is the \$10

to \$30 billion network of well-stocked communal fallout shelters built to house everyone in both rural and urban areas. In our opinion, these shelters could not protect the population of the cities. Perhaps in suburban areas 20 miles or more away from the explosions, some people could be saved (provided, of course, that they were well-organized, disciplined, and able to weather severe stress and disease). However, it does seem to be true that, depending on the type of attack, the time of day, and many other unpredictable circumstances, this program could save a large proportion of the rural population.

A final possibility is the science-fiction program that Kahn has suggested, which would cost \$200 billion. This envisages underground space for factories and urban blast protection that could—as Kahn puts it in *On Thermonuclear War*—“probably take direct hits of ‘small’ bombs (say less than 5 MT) and [might] even take ‘near’ misses of ‘large’ bombs.” Yet even after spending so much we would still have no security: since it is infinitely cheaper to increase striking power than it is to raise the level of protection, even the most hardened shelter cannot guarantee safety. If there were a possibility of adequate shelter, it would be found only in underground cities where we would have to live permanently. Is this troglodytic life the fulfillment of the American Dream?

ASSUMING, WITH ALL the qualifications introduced above, that a complete and thorough shelter program could save millions of people in rural areas, what would post-attack life be like for the survivors—psychologically, morally, economically, and politically? The situation in the shelters, of course, would vary with the different types of shelter and the amount of fallout in the particular locale. Privately owned luxury shelters would be comfortable, provided they were defended successfully and would-be intruders did not retaliate by blocking the air vents. In the public shelters, the danger of over-

crowding would exist, especially if the program were not completed before the attack came. Moreover, we should expect that in many communal shelters disease and meager rations would exact a psychological toll.* People might have radios, which would boost their morale (provided transmitting stations were not destroyed), but this might also be offset by hearing that all big cities had been leveled, and that there was widespread disease. Further, unless the attack were to have occurred at night, many families would have been separated, with people not knowing whether their wives, husbands, or children had found protection. Given all these conditions, what would be the state of mind of those in the shelters, immediately after the attack and for some time to come?

Kahn's answer to this question is very optimistic. "It is my personal belief," he told the Holifield Committee, "speaking less as an expert than as a man who has read widely, that these problems [social, psychological, political, and moral questions] have been grossly exaggerated. Most people will not be psychologically deranged. One is not, for example, going to break up family relations by a war. The family relation is a very stable one. . . . One is not even going to obliterate the fact that people are Americans. By and large, they will be about as honest, hard-working, reliable, and responsible as they are today. While everybody's life and thoughts will be affected by the war the character structure of the survivors is unlikely to be changed in any startling fashion."

In his testimony Kahn also speaks about "post-attack grief" and argues against the

notion many people have that "because of the enormous number of casualties, all of the pleasure, all of the taste will permanently go out of life for almost everybody." "As far as I know," he says, "that just hasn't happened in anything that has occurred before, and one would not expect it to happen even as a result of a large thermonuclear war." One reason for believing that it would not happen is that "in a sense, grief is family-sized. If one loses a close relative or close friend, one will grieve. If one loses one's family, one will grieve even more. But, in some sense, that is about as far as one can go. Most people would not mourn for a million people much more than they would mourn for their family." Kahn also claims (in *On Thermonuclear War*) that a shock spaced over a few days "is good, not bad" so far as its psychological effects are concerned, because "the habits of a lifetime cannot be changed for most people in a few days." And here, finally, is how he summarizes his conclusions as to the psychological effect of a thermonuclear war in his book: "Despite a widespread belief to the contrary, objective studies indicate that even though the amount of human tragedy would be greatly increased in the postwar world, the increase would not preclude normal and happy lives for the majority of the survivors and their descendants."

Bearing in mind that Kahn himself states explicitly that he does not speak as an expert on such matters, and that he also says that the disaster studies which have been made are not sufficient to establish his case on solid scientific grounds, let us now consider the picture he paints of the post-attack psychological situation.

TO BEGIN WITH, the problem of post-attack psychic shock is not one of families breaking up. The problem is how those families that would not be broken up would react to the break-up of the whole world around them. Kahn believes that the character structure of the sur-

* This expectation runs contrary to the experiment of the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratories showing "positive" reactions and "considerable satisfaction in the communal experience" after two weeks. But the NRDL's study has limited applicability; the subjects were volunteer prison convicts who could leave at any time, and are therefore not comparable to survivors, fearful of surfacing to death, chaos, and despair, yet stifling in cramped quarters while they remain sheltered.

vivors would probably not be "changed in any startling fashion," but he fails to say why he believes so, and his patriotic appeal to the fact that "people are Americans" is not an adequate substitute for good reasoning. Indeed, one might more plausibly assume that non-Americans accustomed to totalitarian discipline would, if anything, be less radically affected than the average American. Moreover, the notion that sudden shock is less far-reaching in its effects than prolonged suffering is totally indefensible. Vast psychiatric experience and a huge body of literature are there to show that traumatic neuroses are produced both in peace and war by sudden fright and by tension of an intensity which transcends the amount our nervous system can tolerate. Such neuroses can result in severe depression, suicidal tendencies, self-accusations, amnesia and disorientation, and states of anxiety—all of which may persist for many years. To be sure, long-lasting states of despair can also produce severe psychic damage, but to ignore (as Kahn does) the effect of sudden shocks of great intensity is only to make the picture rosier than it really is.

The experts testifying last August at the Holifield Committee hearings on civil defense tell us that no disaster study yet made reports the psychological consequences of devastation as wide and as great as would result from a thermonuclear war. We, however, would like to recommend to Kahn and his colleagues that they look into one disaster which *has* been studied, and which *is* comparable to a thermonuclear war in terms of loss of life and disruption of society: the Black Death of 1348–1349. As the distinguished historian William L. Langer writes, the Black Death was "the greatest single disaster that has ever befallen European mankind. In most localities a third or even half of the population was lost within the space of a few months. . . ."^{*} Particularly relevant in the

context of the present discussion is the fact that the cities were the hardest hit by the Black Death. Professor Langer notes that with the Black Death the phenomenal economic progress of the 13th century came to a halt, followed by a prolonged depression, but he also feels that in some sense the economic effects were secondary to the long-range psychological consequences of those mass deaths. He writes that "the horror and confusion in many places brought general demoralization and social breakdown. Criminal elements were quick to take over, looting the deserted houses and even murdering the sick to rob them of their jewels." The period after the crisis was marked "by a mood of misery, depression, and anxiety, and by a general sense of impending doom," so much so that it has been suggested that people hesitated to marry and raise a family. (According to reports, this has also been true of the survivors of Hiroshima.) Langer's summation seems to us remarkably applicable to the most likely outcome of a thermonuclear war:

It is perfectly clear that disaster and death threatening an entire community will bring on a mass emotional disturbance, based on a feeling of helpless exposure, disorientation, and common guilt. Furthermore, it seems altogether plausible to suppose that children, having experienced the terror of their parents and the panic of the community will react to succeeding crises in a similar but even more intense manner. In other words, the anxiety and fear are transmitted from one generation to another, constantly aggravated.

Which brings us to Kahn's idea that grief is "family-sized." The trouble with this idea is that grief is not the only problem when a thermonuclear war is in question. We must remember that the survivors would witness a sudden tearing apart of the whole fabric of society. For most people, the sense of stability, and even of their own identity, rests on the meaning society gives to their lives. What then might we expect would happen to

^{*} "The Next Assignment," *The American Historical Review*, January 1958.

men if everything that seemed to be certain became completely unstable within a matter of hours? Previous wars supply no precedent for such a situation. The soldier was of course exposed to great stresses, but life remained stable for him precisely because he knew that his family and the rest of society were still relatively unchanged. In thermonuclear war, however, no part of the social fabric would remain stable. Half of the population killed; most of the leaders gone; no transportation; unburied corpses; epidemics; no communications, electricity, or water supply; divided families; many months necessary to create the minimum conditions for renewing a semblance of life as it was previously known—and for what? What sense would life make? What hope would there be? How much fury would be generated in those who had fared worse than others? How many would blame themselves for being alive when others were dead? What would be the reaction of those who were just managing to get by when refugees turned up to be fed? How much rage would there be against the leaders or scapegoats who would be held responsible for having brought the war on? No, for the majority of people the problem would not only be grief, but the destruction of a way of life which had given meaning to their efforts, which had produced a sense of identity, as well as a sense of hope for the future.

IF THESE WOULD BE the psychological effects of a thermonuclear war, what shall we say about the *moral* consequences of such a war? Keeping in mind the fact that morality, like psychology, is in large part socially conditioned—that individual morality existing without support from the community is rare—let us try to imagine what the postwar moral atmosphere would look like. Let us imagine a situation in which millions of innocent people have been horribly killed; in which we may have defended our own safety by letting our neighbors die; in which we may have to fight for our minimum standards of

living against thousands who come into our area to be fed and sheltered; in which we are envious of those who protected themselves better than we did; in which we are frightened and resentful of those who made thermonuclear war seem palatable and possible. What sort of ethics would develop in such a situation—something similar to a belief in God, in brotherly love, and in freedom, or the ethics of the jungle and the concentration camp? The question very nearly answers itself. Is it not indicative that even now people speak of the duty to defend their shelters with guns against those who have been less “provident” (or affluent), and that at least one “man of God” has said that such actions do not contradict Christian teaching? Yet not only do they contradict Christian teaching, they even contradict the ethics of military behavior which command the individual soldier to risk his own life in order to save his fellow-soldiers. In the light of all this, it seems quite obvious—and even the experts sometimes vaguely hint at it—that post-attack life would be possible only under a military dictatorship which used force to uphold even a minimum of social responsibility. Not morality but martial law would be the basis for whatever vestige of civilized behavior might survive a nuclear war.

In talking about recuperation, Kahn occasionally draws on the experience of the last two wars. Millions of people were killed, he points out, and billions were destroyed in property value, yet only a few years later things had more or less returned to normal, and most of the survivors were again leading “happy” and moral lives. This is simply not the case. The history of man since the First World War, though still to be written, would show an increasing brutalization; it would demonstrate that brutalization, approved by society, leads to further brutalization. The slaughter of the First World War was senseless; in contrast to the belief that this was the war to end all wars and to establish democracy, it was in fact fought for

territorial aggrandizement and the ambitions of the contending political leaders. In that war, for the first time in modern history, a recognized moral principle—that unarmed civilians must not be attacked—was violated by the aerial bombardment of cities on both sides. Then came the state-approved massacres of Stalin and of Hitler, which were allowed to take place with astonishingly little moral protest, except for the kind motivated by political considerations. Finally—let us at any rate hope that it is the final development—came the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians in the Second World War, first by the Nazis, then by the Allies in the mass bombing of German and Japanese cities. What we see here—to use a favorite term of the atomic strategists—is the “escalation” of brutality from 1914 to 1945; if it were not for this escalation, these same strategists would not be able to write about forty or sixty million dead being “acceptable,” nor would anyone be able to take such reasoning as “normal.” The very fact that a balance sheet of death can today be calmly drawn up is the result of the brutalizing influence of two world wars and the systems of terror that have operated in our time. Many experts are unaware of the degree to which this brutalization is contained in the very discussion of the “acceptability” of killing fifty million people on each side, and they are equally unaware of the further brutalization which a thermonuclear war would produce. Moral development, indeed, is always the moral development of a society, and when a society commands mass murder and mass suicide, only very few will be able to hold fast to Judeo-Christian or humanist ethics.

LET US NEXT consider how a thermonuclear war would affect the *economic* situation of the country. Kahn’s estimates here, as in the psychological realm, are quite cheering. It is his thesis in *On Thermonuclear War* that “if proper preparations have been made, it would be possible for us or the Soviets to cope

with all the effects of a thermonuclear war, in the sense of saving most people and restoring something close to the pre-war standard of living in a relatively short time. But there is no reason to believe this will be true unless both nations investigate the problem more thoroughly than has been done so far, and then take the necessary preparations.” S. G. Winter, an economist of the RAND Corporation, in his testimony before the August hearings of the Holifield Committee, is equally optimistic. If his assumptions are valid, he says, “it turns out that capacity is back to the 470 million level in just over a decade.”

But what are the premises on which these estimates rest? In Kahn’s case, the premise (as expressed in his book) is that we succeed in holding damage down to the equivalent of something like 53 metropolitan areas destroyed, and that “seven optimistic assumptions” materialize: “1—Favorable political environment. 2—Immediate survival and patch-up. 3—Maintenance of economic momentum. 4—Specific bottlenecks alleviated. 5—‘Bourgeois’ virtues survive. 6—Workable postwar standards adopted. 7—Neglected effects unimportant.” Why these optimal conditions should all be fulfilled, neither Kahn nor Winter makes clear.

Winter arrives at his hopeful diagnosis by thus qualifying all his conclusions: “The issues are too complex to be fully understood, and consequently there is no possibility of providing answers that are beyond reasonable challenge.” “No amount of research,” he continues, “is likely to alter the fact that decisions will finally have to be based on a large measure of faith in, or skepticism about, the basic strength or resilience of the people and institutions of our Nation.” However, he goes on to admit in discussing the research concerning economic recovery: “A good deal of competent and important work has been done, *but it does not really scratch the surface of this vast problem* and there is in particular, a definite need for a sys-

tematic and comprehensive re-examination of the whole problem." [Our italics.]

Such, then, is the scientific basis for the bright outlook of Kahn and Winter.

The picture grows even darker when we study the conditions Winter specifies for avoiding "complete failure in the recovery effort." Such failure would occur if "the effectiveness of the federal government and many state governments is greatly diminished, the banking system disrupted, most surviving firms are bankrupt, electric power and water supply systems are severely damaged, and the transportation network broken in many places, and where few survivors have the responsibility, authority, and plans to do anything about it." Is it not likely that this is precisely what would occur, even with a vast civil defense program? Another condition for recovery is a release from the necessity of spending money on rearmament; that is, the war must "produce a substantial or fairly permanent reduction in the external threat." How could this be expected to happen? If we were to have destroyed Russian military power, China and other nations probably would still have escaped the worst of the war, and might by then have acquired nuclear weapons. Or are we to assume that after a war we would get universal disarmament, which now appears impossible?

There is yet a further condition which Winter believes important for a rapid recovery and the avoiding of bottlenecks: the willingness and ability of foreign nations to trade with us, and even to provide assistance for our reconstruction. This assumes, apparently, that the European countries and Japan would not have been involved in the war, for what other nations would trade with us or give us assistance? The Soviet Union? China? Australia and New Zealand? Or Latin America, which needs our assistance now? Eventually, Winter adds another condition to his prognosis for recovery: that all analysis of the economic problems hinges on relatively optimistic answers to the psy-

chological problems that would arise in the post-attack situation. If this is the case, then it seems to us that the whole prognosis rests on a house of cards, many of which are themselves shaky, being made up as they are of questionable or improbable premises.

Apart from all this, both Kahn and Winter take insufficient account of the *interaction* of the various disasters that would result from a thermonuclear attack. To mention only a few such interactions: people would need instruction by radio, but most transmitters might be destroyed; people would need hospitals, but most would probably be demolished; certain injuries would have to be treated by extensive washing, but not enough water would be available; the dead would have to be buried in heavy fallout areas, but no one would be able to leave the shelter without getting lethal doses of radiation himself, while the bulldozers which, according to Kahn, might be necessary for mass burials would not be available. Our whole mechanized agriculture depends on gasoline, but the refineries situated near population centers (which make up two-thirds of all refineries in this country) might be destroyed; how could the remaining one-third be made sufficient to supply all agricultural and other needs? Winter, in answering questions after his testimony, was forced to admit that his optimistic calculations are based on the premise of an uninterrupted national transportation system. What value has an analysis of economic recovery that depends on such unrealistic assumptions?

IF WE BRING SOME of the factors neglected by Kahn and Winter into the picture, what would the economic situation after a thermonuclear war look like? Let us assume that all urban centers, more than half (at the least) of the "survival industry," and two-thirds of the heavy industries are bankrupt. Many of their stockholders, who had lived in cities, are dead. Their stocks and bonds have been burned.

Under such circumstances how many would be able to prove property rights? What about money in banks whose books had been destroyed by fire? Winter tells us that "a number of financial institutions are microfilming their vital records . . . but this is not by any means universal." Others, according to the same testimony, would be able to microfilm and store records in a safe place "if they had a day or two of warning." But what about the records of small firms and of individual wills, all of which would be destroyed in the population centers? We must expect that a disappearance of paper from our highly complex economy would wreak havoc with private property.

But even if it turned out to be possible to find records of ownership, another and much more serious threat to the free enterprise system would arise. Some parts of the country would be less devastated than others and would have to help those in worse condition. This could be done only if the state took over the economy and divided goods according to need. Even accepting Winter's optimistic estimate of recovery on the basis of a 25 per cent rate of growth in order to build up destroyed industries, the state would have to control capital investment, and manufacturing would have to be centrally directed in order to secure the production of the most vital necessities. Even if half the population and half the industrial plant were not destroyed, much of our capitalist economy would have to be replaced by a state-directed, centrally managed industrial system. Whether this system would be managed by a small group of industrialists or by the state, and whether individuals would to some extent retain nominal ownership while the state took over ownership of a large chunk of the national wealth, of one thing we can be sure: even the most favorable possible outcome of a thermonuclear war would lead to a centrally controlled managerialism. We have to consider, in addition, that the severe sacrifices and discipline necessary to recovery would

make it imperative to introduce a system of total control not only of production, but of the population. To be sure, such a system might be imposed in the name of freedom rather than by martial law, but it would be totalitarianism all the same. The fact is, then, that even a "successful" thermonuclear war would leave the survivors with a political and economic system not too different from the one we are supposed to be fighting. The alternative, in other words, would not be "better dead than red" but "better red than 'red.'"

IF NO CIVIL DEFENSE program can save our cities or the fabric of our society from the ravages of a thermonuclear war, can an extensive system of shelters nevertheless serve as a deterrent to the enemy? There are two very different forms of deterrence: deterrence *against attack*, and deterrence *against political provocation* (Deterrence I and II in Kahn's terminology). No one claims that shelters would deter an enemy from attacking us first, and President Kennedy has stated explicitly that civil defense "cannot deter a nuclear attack"; according to most experts, the only *attack deterrence* is a powerful second-strike (or retaliatory) capability. But what about *political deterrence*, the attempt to restrain the enemy from political provocations by threatening to strike him first?

According to Kahn and others, civil defense makes it more credible to the enemy that we might strike first; if we cannot protect ourselves against a retaliatory strike, the enemy might call our bluff, discounting the possibility that we would risk our population merely to defend, for example, access routes to Berlin.

Though—as we have seen—civil defense would not save our cities and would even in the "best" case leave us with 50 to 70 million dead, it can be admitted that a shelter program does increase our first-strike credibility and thus improves our political deterrence. However, the enemy must still become convinced of our

willingness to make such a sacrifice, and we are therefore forced to gamble on whether *he* would believe that a particular political aim was important enough for us to accept destruction of these dimensions. (As Kahn himself points out, most of our leaders would not start a war if they expected to lose more than 60 million American lives.)

But in addition to this, civil defense tends to provoke war precisely *because* it improves our political deterrence. The more credible we make our resolve to strike first, the more the Russians will expect us to attack during a crisis, and hence the more they will be likely to launch a preemptive strike. (Kahn himself writes in his book: "The one circumstance under which almost all Soviet experts agree the Russians might strike is the one in which they anticipate a strike from us.") Our own fear of Russian preemption will in turn make us more prone to strike first, and so on up the spiral. Thus, to the extent that our first-strike capacity becomes more credible, Russian preemption becomes more likely; in balance-sheet language, what we gain in political deterrence we pay for in an increased probability of war.

Aside from the war-provoking aspect of first-strike credibility, a large civil defense program tends to indicate that we are getting ready for war, and this might start a vicious circle of preparations, counter weapons, and counter preparations—which would have the combined effect of hastening the onset of war. Even if we could build a system of civil defense so perfect that it would reduce fatalities to the 3–5 million range—a prospect that at the moment seems no more than a dream—is it likely that the Russians would sit back while we were making ourselves invulnerable enough to force them into any concessions we chose? Notwithstanding our second-strike capability, they might attack before we had gotten very far in building our fortress. For, as Kahn points out, they tend to view strategy more

in terms of chess than poker—and in chess one exchanges queens in order to maintain a tactical position that will otherwise deteriorate.*

ANOTHER WAY in which even a national fallout shelter program could increase the chances of war is by lulling the nation into a false sense of security. We are even now being led to believe the claims of *Life* magazine or Dr. Edward Teller, that with some fallout protection most people could survive a thermonuclear war, while the probable fate of our cities is hardly publicized. To support this illusion of safety, all the tricks of modern advertising are being drawn upon: gay pictures of teenagers chatting in shelters, survival statistics based on minimal attacks against military installations, claims of overwhelming military superiority on our side, and even appeals to individuality and the spirit of the old frontier, as though winning a thermonuclear war were a matter of showing manly courage. Thus Kahn says that "We are in a position much like the pioneer. He had to carry a gun because the Indians might attack him." (This analogy makes sense only if one substitutes "neighbors" for "Indians.") Under the spell of this false sense of security the American people may become more willing to support an adventurist military policy rather than more fervent in demanding disarmament negotiations, just as our leaders may become less hesitant about pushing their terrible buttons.

The belief that thermonuclear war need not be catastrophic increases the possibilities of thermonuclear war. As Walter Millis wrote in reviewing *On Thermonuclear War*, "Unless thermonuclear war can be re-established in the official mind as something which it is possible both to fight and to survive, it is unlikely that there

* Kahn himself comprehends the war-provoking aspect of a large civil defense program, and suggests that even a nationwide program of community fallout shelters should be constructed slowly, so as not to "seriously perturb our own people, our allies, and the Russians."

will be a thermonuclear war." We share with Millis the opinion that thermonuclear war has been avoided until now because neither side believed that it was possible to survive such a war. Once it is accepted that thermonuclear war is essentially no more catastrophic than past "conventional" wars, a major restraint will be gone. It is precisely for this reason that we consider it so dangerous to underemphasize the fantastic damage that a thermonuclear war would surely bring about.

SUPPOSE, HOWEVER, that we are mistaken in our arguments and that Kahn's most optimistic estimates are right. What would the future look like in that case? We would have a totally effective civil defense program, and so—it must be assumed—would the Russians. The stabilized deterrent would work and war would be avoided for the next ten years, or, if a war came, only 3 to 5 per cent of the population of each side would be killed. But where are we then? Each new generation of weapons becomes more destructive; people get more frightened; the protection that shelters may give today will be useless against the much more destructive weapons of 1970. The shelter idea, adopted, may logically lead to building our cities underground, or—as has been seriously suggested—to selecting small numbers of people to live in such deeply buried shelters that they would be sure to survive; thus a new nation might be built up from a few thousand survivors. Against even this last hope for survival, Kahn admits that ten years from now we, or another nation, might develop a "doomsday machine" which could literally wipe out all life on this globe. What use, then, is even a good shelter program now if it will not halt the march toward doomsday?

Or are we to believe that after a thermonuclear war in which only 3 per cent of the population has been killed, the leaders will gain enough wisdom to decide on complete disarmament?

To sum up: in debating the position of Kahn and other experts on civil defense we have been forced to accept their data on technical problems, even though we suspect that their data are themselves not free from the bias which quite naturally comes from their intention to prove that thermonuclear war is not only possible but also "acceptable." Not being physicists ourselves, and not having the facilities of big research organizations at our disposal, we can at least examine the logic and mode of thought on which the studies of Kahn and the others are based. Our main criticism is that their approach to the question of the survival of our nation, and even of civilization, is the approach of a gamble. That is, they tend to accept the idea that thermonuclear war need not be catastrophic on the basis of (1) complete uncertainty in many important areas of investigation; (2) an optimistic slant which leans more heavily on estimates of better rather than worse conditions; (3) unproven or definitely wrong assumptions; (4) neglect of various important factors as well as the interactions between factors.

At best, what these experts are giving the American public is a piece of optimistic guesswork governed by the logic of a gamble. With the life of a nation and perhaps of all mankind as the stake, it is neither wise nor sane to gamble. Herman Kahn's arguments leave us convinced that there is only one moral and rational way out of the grim predicament we are in: universal disarmament, combined with a political settlement in which neither side tries to upset the other's present position.

NATHAN GLAZER

CITY PROBLEMS AND JEWISH RESPONSIBILITIES

THE AMERICAN CITY is distinguished among big cities by virtue of the fact that the different ethnic elements making it up are very often of approximately equal size. London and Paris and Tokyo and most other great cities one could mention are all heterogeneous, with people from all over the world living in them. But in even the most heterogeneous of these cities a single group is generally overwhelmingly in the majority—with other definable and distinctive ethnic elements comprising, at most, 2 or 3 per cent of the population. In the American city, by contrast, groups that are socially considered, within the context of American life, to be "minorities," may comprise 10 or 25 or even 50 and more per cent of the population.

Jews, for example, have made up 25 per cent of the population of the greatest American city for the last forty or fifty years—and 10 per cent of the next two or three largest cities. (The proportion has recently become somewhat smaller; Jews today probably comprise a smaller part of metropolitan Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland than they did thirty years ago.) Negroes make up 10 to 30 per cent of the population of our largest cities—though the proportion is somewhat

less for the greater metropolitan areas in which these cities are located, since Negroes are usually either excluded from or economically incapable of entering most suburban places. Catholics make up between one-third and two-thirds of our big cities, and again the proportion is reduced for the metropolitan areas. The suburban areas of the major cities show the highest proportion of white Protestants, and in many of these suburbs they are the majority—as they are the majority in the nation as a whole.

I have spoken of Jews, Negroes, white Catholics, and white Protestants—the four elements which, as Gerhard Lenski points out in his valuable book on Detroit, *The Religious Factor*, largely constitute the American city. Religion, of course, is only one of the factors that define these groups. Each of them has in effect created its own subculture, based on its home-country experiences and on the cultural patterns that resulted from settling in America. Nevertheless, religion has been an important influence in their development into distinct sub-communities—religion both in its organizational form and in the kind of social and political attitudes it tends to foster within the group.

It should be remembered, however, that this division of the American metropolis by religion and race is of relatively recent applicability. Thirty years ago, social class seemed a far more important basis of division, whereas forty

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or fifty years ago, the cultural differences among ethnic groups—between old Americans, old immigrant groups, and new immigrant groups—were felt to be the most relevant classifications. American Catholicism seemed a less significant category, for example, than the division into Irish, German, Italian, Polish, and Slovak Catholics; American Protestantism less important than the division into Anglo-Saxon, German, and Scandinavian Protestants. Today it is clear that the most significant sub-communities of the American city have ceased to be definable by the earlier distinctions of ethnic background or class, which have now been replaced by religion and race.

EVEN AS RECENTLY as twenty years ago it would not have been possible to foresee the social structure that has emerged in American cities in our day. For this structure is to a great extent the result of the success of the Catholic Church in beginning to mold all its disparate ethnic elements into a single American Catholic community. The Italian immigrants—the second largest Catholic immigrant group—did not at the time of their arrival show as great an attachment to the Church as did the Irish and the Polish. What is more, in a number of cities a positive antagonism developed between the Irish (who were solidly in control both of the local Democratic machines and of the Church) and the Italians. This antagonism found expression in the adherence of large Italian groups to the Republican party. For a while, it also resulted in a certain amount of successful Protestant missionary activity—Norman Thomas when he was a minister worked in a mission church in East Harlem (then an Italian neighborhood); Fiorello La Guardia was a Protestant as well as a Republican, and while he was not typical of the Italian immigrant masses, they were not in the least put off by either of his affiliations. American Protestants saw in the Italians' weak attachment to

their Latin Catholic Church a golden opportunity (much as they now see one among the Puerto Ricans): if the Italians were rebelling politically against the Irish by becoming Republicans, why should they not carry their rebellion further and become Protestant?

This did not happen. The spread of Protestantism among Italians turned out to be only a temporary response to the dislocations of their new life as immigrants when they were being reached by the Protestants who came to work among them in settlement houses and mission centers. The Italians were won back to the Church. Or rather, they were won over to something that had never existed for them in Italy: a Catholic Church with a uniquely American coloration, a Church characterized by powerful organization and great fund-raising capacity, puritanism and sexual prudery (of the Irish as well as the American variety), and a generally narrow and illiberal outlook in politics and social life (though combined with an enlightened attitude on race).

Thus a unified Catholic community has begun to crystallize in America—albeit one whose character is a matter of serious concern to many liberal Catholic intellectuals. A critical factor in the emergence of this community was the rise of many Catholics of the newer immigrant groups—particularly the Italian—to middle-class status after the Second World War. Interestingly enough, middle-class Catholicism turned out to be even stronger than working-class Catholicism. In an earlier time, the successful Italian became Protestant, much as the successful Jew became Reform; but later, just as the Conservative and even Orthodox Jewish groups learned how to compete with the Reform movement for the loyalty of middle-class Jews, so did the Catholic Church find means for holding on to the newly prosperous Catholics. The new middle-class Catholic Church is not ethnically bound, as was the working-class Church; it uses English, its ethnic

composition is more diverse—it has become, in fact, a Catholic melting pot. And because more middle-class children attend Catholic schools and more of the adults participate in Catholic organizational activity, the middle-class Catholic becomes *more* Catholic than his working-class co-religionist—that is, he adopts more of the attitudes, more strongly, that tend to distinguish the American Catholic community. The success of American Catholicism in bringing together its constituent groups, and the organizational strength and political weight of the resultant community, are matters of vital importance to any consideration of intergroup relations in the city.

THERE ARE CERTAIN obvious historical patterns in the relations among the three dominant urban “minorities.” By the time the Jews had come to assume an important role in the life of the great cities, Irish Catholics were already entrenched in local politics. The neighborhoods into which Jews moved were most often Catholic neighborhoods. The group that has usually followed the Jews into these neighborhoods is of course the Negroes. Intergroup relations as seen from the Jewish point of view, then, have traditionally centered on the Catholics—who came before and who often dominated city politics—and the Negroes—who are coming after and who will now be playing a greater and greater civic role.

Of the problems posed for the metropolis by these three minorities, the Jewish group raises fewer than do the other two. Jews are the wealthiest of the three. As compared with the Negroes, they are better supplied with organization; and since their problems are so minor, the fact that measured by Catholic standards they are disunited is of little significance. And though, like the Catholics, Jews wish to maintain a somewhat separate subculture, few of them demand government aid in doing so.

Both the Catholic and the Negro com-

munities are, however, embroiled in problematic issues. The existence of the Catholic community generates two main questions: to what extent Catholic political power is being used to impose a special Catholic morality on the rest of the city population; and to what extent the community at large should support the special school system of the Catholic group, which is one of the primary elements in the maintenance of its separate subculture. With Negroes, on the other hand, there is the major question of their separation from the general community, the result both of discrimination and poor preparation in education and family life. This separation occurs in housing, in schooling, in work. It means that as the Negroes become a sizable part of the population of the old cities, the government of these cities will come more and more under the domination of a group whose character is inevitably marked by resentment and a certain limitation of experience. Under these circumstances the vitally necessary cooperation between city and suburbs will be hampered by differences in outlook and standards, by the operation of prejudice on the one side and bitterness on the other.

By contrast, the problems of intergroup relations of concern to Jews today are the problems of the society in general, the problems that must preoccupy anyone who thinks of the public welfare, of the nature of the still fluid American society. Jewish intergroup agencies, for instance, no longer concentrate exclusively on specifically Jewish matters. For them the issue is no longer, as it once was, that of fighting anti-Semitism or discrimination against Jews; the issue is the kind of city and state the Catholics prefer, on the one hand, and the kind of city problems Negroes create, on the other. The “anti-Semitism” of the Negro ghetto is an expression of the relation of Negro and white in the Northern city, and while Jews are a prime target of Negro resentment be-

cause of their concentration as landlords and storekeepers and (sometimes) welfare officials, any other white group in the same position would be victim to the same resentment.

THERE IS YET a fourth group to be considered here—a group that has all but vanished from our city-consciousness—the white Protestants. This group withdrew from the government of the great cities some time ago—to devote itself instead to the management of pleasant suburbs and to the higher levels of politics—and therefore in the context of urban intergroup problems, the white Protestants seem rather hazy and distant. In New York City, for example, they form about one-eighth of the population; those of Anglo-Saxon descent form perhaps a third of this small minority. Nevertheless, in the nation as a whole this group that is so minimally represented in New York City still makes up half the white population. And what is more important, culturally it is still the normative element in America.

Americans talk of their pluralist society, and this pluralism is a very real thing—both in the sense that individual rights are supreme and in the sense that individuals can come together for a wide range of actions, including those that make possible the creation of virtually separate subcultures. But despite the fact that the protection of individual rights permits an approach to a pluralist society, America remains after all a country founded by Anglo-Saxon Protestants, and one still in large measure governed and controlled by their descendants. Not only do Anglo-Saxon Protestants dominate the great industries and great institutions of America today, they also dominate American history. Jewish, Catholic, and Negro children learn about *their* great men in school; and indeed, American history would be distorted if more than a few individuals from other groups were given any great prominence in the record. The

white Protestants created the American public school and have stamped its character; they created the great American universities; they created whatever it is that can be called the American spirit and American culture. The rest of us, in truth, are junior partners in this spirit and this culture.

The Jewish group, however, has something in common with the white Protestants. Unlike the Catholics and the Negroes, both of whom have demands to make on the society (the Catholics, to help relieve the heavy burden of their independent school system, the Negroes to achieve equality and the special measures in education and employment that will bring them up to a level where they can compete fairly with the other groups), the Jews and the white Protestants are on the whole satisfied with things as they are. The Jews are troubled by some relatively minor irritants, but they have no major issue as a group comparable to those agitating the Negroes and the Catholics. And by comparison with the Negroes and the Catholics, both the Jews and the white Protestants are extremely prosperous.

But if the Jews and the white Protestants at the moment are economically the most favored and politically the most content, they are, by the same token, left with a great measure of responsibility for dealing with those situations that upset and disrupt the society. For the white Protestants, this responsibility is an old and time-honored one—the great reforming movements are theirs, just as the great efforts to integrate immigrants and ex-slaves into American society were initially made by them. They founded the first schools for the ex-slaves and staffed them, and not long afterward they founded the welfare agencies and settlement houses and schools for the impoverished immigrants, and staffed them. I think cities were a better place for the poor and underprivileged to come to at a time when the Anglo-Saxon Protestant reforming and social spirit was strong, than they are in many ways today.

There is a difference between a charitable, personal concern for people—and this was the nature of early schools for the poor, welfare agencies, and settlement houses—and a bureaucratic assumption of responsibility, which expresses concern through the laws establishing the rights and benefits of the underprivileged, but not through the individuals who administer those rights and benefits.

Jews coming into the cities, and other immigrant groups with them, were fortunate in being met with the old personal and charitable concern. That it did a great deal for them is evident, for example, from reading the autobiography of Morris Raphael Cohen; and there are many similar accounts. One finds—to point to only one aspect of the situation—that the models of behavior presented by early Protestant schoolteachers and social workers played a crucial role in the lives of these immigrants. Whatever the limitations of such models, they had the virtue of a clarity that comes with the relative inflexibility of norms and social attitudes. By contrast, today's urban migrants, Negro and Puerto Rican and Southern white, come up against a huge set of bureaucratic structures, generally incapable either of communicating any true personal concern for their welfare or of serving as appropriate models of behavior.

I THINK THE greatest potential resource for the solution of intergroup tensions in the American city is the white Protestant community (I speak, of course, of the Northern and Western city—in the South the situation is completely different); and I believe that the most important potential role of the Jewish social agencies is to devote themselves—as elements of this Protestant community did in the past and still do today—to the needs of the whole community, in the faith that general improvements will also further the interests of the Jewish sub-community. As we have seen, the white Protestant role in the city was diminished by the growth of urban

Catholic and Jewish populations, and the withdrawal of the white Protestants to the suburbs. Today, the suburbs are inevitably involved in the problems of the cities. Negroes will eventually move into the suburbs, and the future of community life will to a large extent depend on what kind of experience they have in the city, what kind of education and opportunities become available to them. A narrow self-interest on the part of white Protestants will not keep them from becoming involved in this issue, nor will a narrow self-interest on the part of Jews.

Now, in this regard, the white Protestants have the advantage of a long tradition of disinterested action on behalf of other groups. Jews on the other hand have had to take care of their own throughout their history and have developed no such tradition. One of the greatest present needs in American Jewish life is a whole shift of emphasis to the disinterestedness Jews are now happily in the position to express. They should no longer take it for granted that the Jewish community center in a given area is to be moved out when that area turns Negro; that Jewish social work agencies, dealing with disturbed adolescents, families, and the aged, should exist mainly to serve Jews—that, in effect, the Jewish responsibility in providing services for those damaged by life remains for the most part restricted to their own group. (Jewish hospitals already devote a good part of their resources to the care of poor non-Jews.) Perhaps this means that many Jewish agencies, which now command resources ten or twenty times greater than those provided in the Negro community by public or private funds, should become public and non-Jewish. Such a transformation would by no means be easy to effect, but here the Jewish community at large might learn from its defense agencies, which, with the vast diminution of anti-Semitism in recent times, have devoted an increasing portion of their energies to fighting for other minority groups, notably the Negro. Indeed, it

would be of major public benefit if a few of the competent and well-staffed agencies dealing with intergroup relations for the Jewish community could go so far as to turn themselves over to the Negroes—if anyone could think of how this might be done. In the same way it would benefit the general public welfare if some of the resources that go into community centers and synagogue centers, which often provide duplicating services within the Jewish community, could be used for Negroes. The real point about this shift in emphasis is not that it would bring Jewish philanthropy to others who need it more, but that by improving the general situation Jews improve their own. For just as we recognize that a prosperous America and Western Europe will not be able to survive intact surrounded by an impoverished and resentful world, so it is impossible for prosperous Jewish and white Protestant communities to live peacefully and happily in the same cities with deprived and resentful groups.

THE WHITE Protestants can teach Jews a good deal about the creation of various agencies to serve other groups. Not that Jews could take over these methods without altering them. One of the reasons white Protestants—I have particularly in mind some of the activity of the liberal denominations—can do so much is that they are not religiously or theologically bound to a single ethnic group; Episcopalians and Methodists and Congregationalists and Presbyterians can work intimately and effectively among local Negro communities because they are linked to them by religion, and may even look forward to gaining new adherents from among those they help. And yet even Quakers, who are very little interested in proselytizing, carry on most impressive work among the urban depressed.

In this connection the group images presented respectively by Jews and white Protestants in a growing Negro neighborhood offer a significant comparison. The

Jews are represented by landlords, storekeepers, by the community center and synagogue which have almost nothing to do with the local non-Jewish community and are ready to move out when the neighborhood changes. Only on a higher level—remote from the attention of the neighborhood people—is there some co-operative activity between Negro and Jewish social workers, city employees, labor leaders, defense agencies, and liberal political figures. The local white Protestant representation or “witness,” by contrast, consists of mission churches and settlement houses providing a variety of activities and even local political leadership. It is true that the young men and women working under the auspices of the local Protestant-sponsored activity may be Jewish—but this only serves to underline the lack of channels within the Jewish community for the same kind of activity. Unquestionably the common link of religion is an important basis for Protestant work among Negroes. But it must be pointed out that fifty years ago the same sort of program was carried out by Protestants—and only partially for missionary purposes—among Jews and Italian Catholics.

I have discussed up to now the potential role of Jews and white Protestants—as the most prosperous of the four groups and the ones having the least pressing community concerns—in dealing with Negroes. On its side the Negro community, at least from the evidence of its press and the statements of its leaders, does not appear to want this kind of aid at all. Obviously self-help is both more gratifying and more desirable; and obviously Negro nationalists like the Muslims are not going to take kindly to the interest of any whites in Negro problems. But the Negro community contains many elements, many different kinds of people. There are scores of needs and services that many Negroes would accept willingly from the hands of whites, if whites were willing to offer them. And the giving of these services would have not only the advantage of

helping many individual Negroes, but also of helping to create the personal contacts that have been so lacking and that Jews, whatever their ideological views, have a duty to encourage.

BUT WHAT OF the other great problem in intergroup relations, the Catholic sub-community? This is in the long run, I feel, as difficult a problem as that of the Negro, though certainly a less intense and pressing one. Here there is little Jews can learn from white Protestants—after all, the first of the intergroup conflicts that have characterized the American metropolis since it lost its white Protestant majority was between the Protestants and the Catholics. In this area, in fact, Protestants might perhaps learn something from Jews, who have experienced throughout the world and through centuries of history a hundred varieties of intergroup adjustment.

This broad summary of group conditions in the American metropolis suggests

that urgent needs exist in one of the four sub-communities, the Negro; that in another, the Catholic, needs and resources are closer to a state of balance, even though the burden of maintaining services is severely felt; that in the other two, the Jewish and the white Protestant, resources are greater than needs. In some way, the overabundant resources of these communities must be allocated to those who need them, and here the tradition of Protestant charity and social welfare—which is still very much alive—offers a model for Jews in their future relation to Negroes. The existence of a Catholic sub-community with its own special values and attitudes presents a problem in intergroup relations whose solution is less clear. Perhaps if Jews can learn from the best traditions of white Protestants how to manage and share their prosperity, Jews in turn can teach Protestants the lesson of how communities differing in both outlook and structure may still manage to live together in a modern unified society.

JAMES GROSSMAN

THE SACCO-VANZETTI CASE RECONSIDERED

IN THE SEVEN YEARS of their ordeal, from their arrest on May 5, 1920, to their execution on August 23, 1927, Sacco and Vanzetti grew in spiritual stature. They had their inevitable setbacks; periods of gloom and despair, of mental derangement close to madness, interrupted their cheerful serenity and marred the integrity of their passion, but in the end they transcended themselves.

Since their deaths they have transcended human nature. Their literary remains, the letters and statements so beautiful in themselves, have taken on the precious beauty of words of saints and martyrs. As in so many canonizations the harshness of reality has fallen from them. We tend to think of them as if they were solely and always—aside from moments of just eloquence—gentle, tender, sweet. Although they are there for us to see in the published letters, we rarely quote from Vanzetti such strong words of his as “. . . our blood will call for revenge,” or note that the anarchist he praises for

spending all of his money on bread and books for the poor is, as he points out, the killer of the French president, Sadi Carnot. These instances are not evidence of guilt nor do they belittle Vanzetti, but they do show a certain toughness of character that is not part of our usual notion of him.*

The essence of the myth is to treat the two men as if their great moments were the whole of their lives. Men who died so grandly were incapable, we feel, of deserving that death. But while we surely must take this grandeur into account, we must not restrict ourselves to contemplating only it when we consider if these two could have been the men who to steal a payroll, brutally shot down the paymaster and his guard in South Braintree. We must somehow escape the myth and see Sacco and Vanzetti not as dying but as living men.

We can do this the more easily if in our minds we separate the two men from each other and consider the evidence for or against each separately. It would also be well to separate, as much as we can, the question of guilt from that of the fairness of the legal proceedings. This is not easy. Sacco and Vanzetti have become famous because of the unjustness of their trial before Judge Webster Thayer and the denial of eight motions for a new trial which all had to be argued before this very judge, whose prejudice increased through the years. His decisions were subject only to a narrow legalistic review by the highest court of the state. In response to a widespread feeling even in

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* *The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti*, edited by Marion Denman Frankfurter and Gardner Jackson (Dutton, Everyman Paperback, 414 pp., \$1.85).

Massachusetts that further consideration was necessary, Governor Fuller, in addition to making his own investigation of the case, appointed an Advisory Committee consisting of President Lowell of Harvard, President Stratton of MIT, and Robert Grant, a former probate judge and novelist, to hold hearings and report to him. For many, the sense of irreparable and inevitable injustice was intensified by the blatant vulgar rhetoric of the Governor's decision denying a pardon and the unhappy uneasy tone of the Advisory Committee's report, which found both that the trial was fairly conducted and that the Judge was guilty of "a grave breach of official decorum" in discussing the case off the bench. On this grave breach the report is vague: "... we do not believe . . . he used some of the expressions attributed to him . . . there is exaggeration in what the persons to whom he spoke remember." This is so general that we cannot tell whether or not the Committee intended to cast any doubt on the authenticity of Judge Thayer's most famous off-the-bench remark, credibly reported to the Committee by Professor Richardson of Dartmouth. These are the casual, self-gratulatory words, which echoing around the world three years later, and grimly displayed at the dead men's coffins, made the case for so many a byword of infamy: "Did you see what I did with those anarchistic bastards the other day?"

In a very serious sense men who have been tried unfairly have never truly been found guilty. But this does not mean that Sacco and Vanzetti could not have committed the act of which they have been accused. Whether they did is a question of little importance in determining the unfairness of the legal proceedings but of great importance independently of it. These two men have so large a place in American culture that their lives and deeds are a part of American history and should be examined like any other historical question.

Robert Montgomery's able marshaling of the evidence against Sacco and Vanzetti loses much of its force because the author has undertaken to prove not only that they were murderers but also that every aspect of the trial and of all the subsequent proceedings was completely fair, and that there can be no serious criticism of Judge Thayer's conduct.*

But while it is easy for us to attack Montgomery's point of view, it is difficult to escape from the force of the facts he cites. He stands like a lion in our path. He has brought out clearly that in the case of Sacco, if we are to have an opinion, we must choose between these alternatives: either Sacco is one of the murderers or else the ballistic evidence against him has been deliberately faked to make him seem guilty of murder.

NICOLA SACCO before his arrest was a skilled piece-worker in a shoe factory in Stoughton, Massachusetts, steady and reliable, earning high wages. He had \$1,500 in the bank, lived happily with his charming wife and little boy, enjoyed caring for his garden and giving to the poor the vegetables he grew beyond his needs. "There never was a better fellow than Nick Sacco, nor one with a kinder heart. He couldn't kill a chicken," said the factory owner's son, George Kelley, and the Kelleys trusted Sacco with the keys to the factory. As at times he cared for the fires and acted as a watchman, it was useful that he had a pistol, a .32 Colt automatic. Many Italians apparently owned them without obtaining the necessary pistol permit. He too neglected to get one, although he had been urged to do so by his employer.

In his political views he was an anarchist, but the only known consequence of this had been non-violent: with Bartolomeo Vanzetti, whom he did not then know well, and about a hundred other Massachusetts Italians, he went to Mexico to avoid the draft when war broke out. Returning in October 1917, he worked for a few days, under an assumed name, at the Rice & Hutchins factory in South Braintree. This is the first and least important of several coincidences whose cumulative effect is odd if Sacco is innocent.

In front of this very factory on April 15, 1920, a few minutes after 3 P.M., Frederick Parmenter, the paymaster of Slater & Morrill, and his guard, Alessandro Berardelli, were carrying a payroll of \$15,776.51 to their factory next door. Two men who had been idly leaning against a fence stepped

* *Sacco-Vanzetti: The Murder and the Myth*, by Robert H. Montgomery (Devin-Adair Company, 370 pp., \$5.00).

forward and shot them to death. The murderers, joined by a third man, seized the payroll boxes, jumped into a large Buick that drove up, in which there was one man besides a sickly looking, light-haired driver. As they escaped through the town, they threw from the car tacks thrust into cut pieces of rubber hose to make them land upright; this made pursuit difficult. From the rear window of the car-top—its glass had been removed—observers thought they saw a shotgun or rifle protruding, making pursuit dangerous.

The killings seem sheer frenzy. Shots were fired at Parmenter as he fled and at Berardelli as he was falling; but these may have been deliberate, either to discourage pursuit by spreading terror, or to prevent recognition by silencing victims who knew their assailants. The man who seemed to be firing demoniacally at Berardelli and who stood on the running board or leaned from the side of the escaping car pointing and firing his pistol, was identified at the trial by some eyewitnesses as Sacco, but others, a greater number, denied the identification.

The identification evidence at the trial in 1921 was far from convincing. Two witnesses had been doubtful at the preliminary hearing if Sacco was the man whom they had seen. Three other eyewitnesses, also positive at the trial, had earlier told acquaintances—according to the latter's testimony—that they had not seen clearly enough to identify anyone. Two of these three witnesses after the trial recanted their identification but came back immediately to the Commonwealth's side. The third, who was known at the trial to have a bad reputation for veracity, was also a thief; he was in court on his own legal business—stealing from his employer—when he recognized Sacco, who was being arraigned at the time.

At the trial Sacco told how he had spent April 15 in Boston. His mother had died some time in March, and he decided to go back to Italy to visit his father, a prosperous man. He had gone to Boston late in March or early in April to inquire at the Italian Consulate about a passport and was told that he would need a photograph of himself and his family. On April 14 he arranged with George Kelley to go to Boston the next morning and to try to get back on

the noon train. A number of witnesses testified clearly and coherently at the trial to seeing Sacco in Boston at different hours on the fifteenth. By different associations, some of higher probative value than others, they fixed the date. A few of these witnesses may have been philosophical anarchists, and all except for one were Italians: I know of no reason to doubt the honesty of any of them.

April 15 was pleasant and sunny. Instead of going immediately to the Consulate on Berkeley Street, which opened at ten, Sacco loafed the day away. He walked to the North End, read a paper, chatted with a friend. After a leisurely lunch with others he left the North End for the Consulate, where he arrived a little after two. (It closed at three.) His trip was wasted; he had brought a cabinet-size photograph, too large for a passport. Even then he went back to the North End, had coffee, bought groceries, and at last went home.

On the sixteenth, at work early, he told George Kelley a story that any truant on a holiday might make up: there was such a crowd at the Consulate waiting for passports that he couldn't get out in time to return to work. If Sacco was innocent, there is an unbearable cruelty to his escapade. Had he gone directly to the Consulate and straight back to work, George Kelley's testimony to his presence in the factory would have given him, as has been wilyly said, "an American alibi" that everyone would have had to believe.

Sacco quit work on May 1. On the fourth he went to Boston with a photograph of the right size and obtained a passport the same day. He planned to go back to Italy on the seventh.

SACCO AND VANZETTI had been obscure followers of Luigi Galleani, "the Nestor of the Massachusetts anarchists," who had been arrested during the war and had been deported in 1919. Early in 1920 the radicals of Sacco and Vanzetti's group were disturbed by what we call the Red Scare but they called the White Terror. It is hard to realize now the extent of the brutal illegal violence of the government in its raids on radicals and suspected radicals of all kinds, especially aliens. At this very time Judge George Anderson was conducting *habeas*

corpus hearings that would reveal the shocking way in which aliens in the New England area had been rounded up and held for deportation.

On May 3, 1920, Andrea Salsedo, one of the group, plunged to his death from the fourteenth floor of a building in New York City. He had been in the custody of the Department of Justice, questioned apparently about the June 1919 bomb outrages, which the Department thought might be the work of Galleani's group. Vanzetti had gone to New York just a few days before to inquire about Salsedo. He had been told that there would be Red raids on May 1, and was warned to hide dangerous literature. Nothing had been done, but Salsedo's death shocked Sacco and Vanzetti into action. They arranged with a friend, Orciani, to use the old car of another anarchist, Mike Boda, to collect and hide literature. All four on the night of May 5, 1920, met at the house of the garage owner who stored the car.

Unwittingly, Sacco and Vanzetti had fallen into a trap. The police suspected Boda of some connection with an attempted hold-up in Bridgewater on December 24, 1919, and with the South Braintree crime. After being questioned at his home, Boda disappeared. But the police knew of his car and instructed the garage owner to phone them if Boda came for it. While the garage owner explained to Boda that the car should not be used because it had 1919 license plates, his wife went to their next-door neighbors' and phoned the police. The four men left without the auto, Boda and Orciani by the latter's motorcycle, Sacco and Vanzetti by streetcar. Boda disappeared again and turned up in Italy. Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested on the streetcar by a policeman who had been instructed to board it.

The two men were armed. Sacco's Colt, tucked into his waistband, had nine cartridges in it, and he had twenty-three more in his pocket. Vanzetti had a loaded .38 caliber H&R revolver; he also had four shotgun shells but no shotgun. Each man may have made a move for his weapon. When questioned by the police and District Attorney Katzmenn they lied about what they had been doing that night and about much else.

We can agree with the prosecution that

all this showed "consciousness of guilt." We need not agree, however, that any of it—even trying to draw their guns, if they did—shows that they were murderers. It may prove no more than that they were radicals who feared being murdered or tortured to death as they were sure their fellow radical, Salsedo, had been two days before. At the trial they gave a much less melodramatic explanation of their armed state. Sacco carried his gun in his waistband not for a quick draw but to prevent its being noticed, as he had no permit. Because they were closing up their house he had intended that afternoon to shoot off all his cartridges in the woods; getting into talk with Vanzetti and the others he had forgotten about them and still had them on him when arrested. Vanzetti, unlike Sacco, usually carried his revolver, for he had fairly large sums of money when he went to buy fish in Boston. The four shotgun shells had been found by Mrs. Sacco that afternoon while cleaning out the house; Vanzetti had taken them to give to a friend who hunted and would probably give him fifty cents "for propaganda."

QUESTIONED BY District Attorney Katzmenn in the police station on May 6, Sacco remembered reading in the papers about the South Braintree murders. He thought, at first rather uncertainly but then fairly positively, that he had been at work on the day of the crime. He recalled being in Boston a week or so before the fifteenth, and said that this was the only whole day off he had taken for the passport. The Lowell Committee was certain that Sacco could not innocently have forgotten the April 15 trip, and that therefore there was none. It seems to me that if an inference is to be drawn from his statement that he had worked that day it would be in Sacco's favor. He had told George Kelley that he was in Boston on the fifteenth; if this was a cover for murder one would expect him to tell the same story to the District Attorney. He might not, however, if he was unable at the moment to answer questions on where he had been and whom he had seen; but this attributes to Sacco a degree of craftiness that does not fit in with what we usually think of him.

To adopt an interesting argument of

Philip Stong's, Sacco could have been in Boston on April 15 and have deliberately lied about it to protect the radicals he had met there. The very first questions asked by the police ("Are you a citizen? Do you belong to any clubs or societies? Are you an anarchist?") must have suggested to him that the police were looking for radicals. District Attorney Katzmman, asking Sacco what he had done on the day before he read about the Braintree crime, might well have seemed to be pursuing the same subject and to be interested in radical activities on the day of the murder and not in the murder itself.

IN NOVEMBER 1925, after six motions for a new trial had been denied and were pending on appeal, startling evidence of the kind the defense had looked for feverishly throughout the country was found, or rather, revealed itself in Dedham jail where Sacco was incarcerated. A young prisoner, Celestino Madeiros, who had confessed truthfully to killing a bank cashier in an unsuccessful holdup and who had been found guilty, wrote on a slip of paper that was delivered by underground channels to Sacco, the following words: "I hear by confess to being in the south Braintree shoe company crime and Sacco and Vanzetti was not in said crime."

Death-house confessions are always suspected. Apparently we fear that criminals certain of dying take on themselves naturally the sins of others. Madeiros's confession has about it a suggestion of this generosity; he had seen "Mrs. Sacco and the kids" at the jail and felt sorry for them. It has been argued—I believe unsoundly—that Madeiros's position when he confessed was not hopeless, as his own case was then being appealed, and he was actually granted a new trial on the ground that the jury had not been instructed in precise enough terms that he was presumed to be innocent. This decision of the highest court may well be salutary; where a form of instruction sacred from long use has been disregarded a new trial must be granted, even to a self-confessed killer for whom the instruction in any form can be of no practical use. (It is, however, a curious decision, as Vanzetti himself noted, to place beside this same court's holding shortly after that nothing that had

happened in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, of whose guilt there was much doubt, necessitated a new trial.) I do not believe that Madeiros could have anticipated that he would get a second trial or that any good could come from one; on his second trial his freely-made confession of the bank murder was read to the new jury and led to a new conviction.

Even if his position was hopeless we must still keep in mind Madeiros's bitter answer to the alienists who asked him why he confessed to the Braintree crime: "Maybe it is true." Madeiros has made this difficult, for he would not talk straightforwardly about the affair. His own role, he said, had been minor. He sat in the rear of the car with a gun in his hand, scared, drunk, or in an epileptic fit—so he described himself at different times to explain why he remembered so little of what happened in connection with the hold-up and escape.

While he was astoundingly ignorant of much that was public knowledge of the case, Madeiros did know of at least one circumstance that had not been revealed at the trial. He told how the escaping bandits losing their way stopped in a driveway to make inquiries and turned the car around. The woman in whose yard this had happened was found by the defense and remembered the incident. She had told the District Attorney of it but had not been called at the trial possibly because she identified Sacco as the driver and there was no evidence he could drive a car. Several years after the incident, Madeiros was living nearby—a convenient fact if, ultimately, we feel compelled to decide that he was not an actor in the incident but must have learned of it by hearsay.

Madeiros refused to name the principals, but this was only a convention, for he clearly incriminated them. By the leads he dropped—Italians in Providence who had stolen from freight cars—Herbert Ehrmann, new junior counsel for Sacco and Vanzetti, soon discovered that it was Joe Morelli and his gang whom Madeiros meant. This gang had stolen from freight cars; some of the stolen goods came from the shoe factories in South Braintree; spotters had been used to learn of shipments, and they might well have been in South Braintree and have seen how the paymaster and his guard

walked down the street on pay-day. Joe Morelli had a striking physical resemblance to Nicola Sacco and could have been the man the witnesses saw. (It is unfortunate that the new edition of Herbert Ehrmann's fascinating book omits the page of photographs and the profile view of Sacco and Morelli of the 1933 edition.*)

On this initial important discovery Herbert Ehrmann, by skillful investigation and clever hypothesis, built a brilliant superstructure. His book is a remarkably attractive and persuasive presentation of it because it is the story of a search for truth in which, as in an honest detective story, we are always at the investigator's side, sharing his doubts, working on his clues, taking his wrong turns with him. He has been so frank with us that when he arrives at certainty with a perfect detailed reconstruction of the crime, it seems churlish on our part to insist that actually we can only be certain of that one fact with which we started—Joe Morelli's resemblance to Sacco. All of the rest—who the other members of the murder party were, the course they took, the two cars they used—may or may not be true.

Ehrmann's dedicated effort to save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti influences his book. What he proves is that a strong case can be made against Joe Morelli, a stronger one possibly than was made against Sacco by the identification and consciousness-of-guilt evidence. This is excellent trial tactics, a dramatic demonstration of how weak the Commonwealth's case was at the trial. But today it is not enough. The post-trial ballistic evidence against Sacco has to be reckoned with; it is so strong that if genuine it is more likely that Sacco was at South Braintree than the gangster Joe Morelli, who so strangely resembled him. If we adopt this conclusion it does not violate anything we know about Madeiros, who, despite his crimes, comes out of Ehrmann's book as a singularly gallant, romantic young man, about whom the author is always eloquent. "Doomed, hopeless . . . worm-eaten from birth," Madeiros could as easily have been moved to speak by the decency to lie as by that to tell the truth.

* *The Untried Case: The Sacco-Vanzetti Case and the Morelli Gang*, by Herbert B. Ehrmann (Vanguard Press, 268 pp., \$3.95).

THE MOST IMPORTANT circumstantial evidence against Sacco is furnished by a discharged cartridge case and bullet. Four discharged cartridge cases picked up at the scene of the murder were turned over to the police by Fraher, the Slater & Morrill superintendent, and are usually referred to as the Fraher shells. The prosecution claimed that one of them—a Winchester cartridge case, often called Fraher Shell W—was fired in Sacco's Colt. Two bullets were extracted from Parmenter's body, four from Berardelli's. Prosecution and defense experts agreed at the trial that only one, the third bullet taken from Berardelli's body, was fired from a Colt. This, the only bullet that can possibly be connected with Sacco, was the fatal one. It is sometimes called, a little luridly, the mortal bullet; sometimes Bullet III, from the identifying mark, three parallel scratches made by the medical examiner when he extracted it.

The defense experts at the trial were unequivocally of the opinion that Bullet III was not fired from Sacco's Colt. The prosecution expert, Captain Van Amburgh, was "inclined to believe" that it was. Captain Proctor, head of the State Police, said that it was "consistent with being fired from that pistol," which may mean of course no more than that it was fired from a Colt and might have been fired from any other .32 automatic Colt in the whole world. The unusually cautious wording of Captain Van Amburgh's opinion and the extremely limited nature of Captain Proctor's were not commented on at the trial. Actually, it is universally agreed that the testimony at the trial of both defense and prosecution experts is of no real value. The experts had, however, done one thing that was of future importance; both sides had fired test cartridges through Sacco's pistol.

In 1923, in connection with the fifth supplemental motion for a new trial, Albert Hamilton, a new defense expert, had photographs made of the ballistic exhibits. The photographs of the test shells and of Fraher Shell W that were made by the defense are important evidence against Sacco. From these it can be determined that the engravings made on a test shell when it struck against the breechblock of Sacco's pistol are so like the breechblock engravings on Fraher Shell W that it can be inferred

that the same pistol, i.e. Sacco's, fired both shells. In the 1930's two disinterested experts, Professor C. O. Gunther of Stevens Institute and his son, Jack D. Gunther, a New York lawyer, in their authoritative book, *The Identification of Firearms*, published a composite photograph of Fraher Shell W and a test shell (based I believe on the Hamilton photographs) which makes it easy to see that the breechblock engravings on one shell match those on the other.

It has been an accepted theory that the tool-mark pattern on a breechblock leaves a distinctive signature on shells as they are forced against it in firing. It has also been accepted that the striations on a bullet made by its being fired through a rifled barrel constitute the signature of that barrel. The difficulty has been in reading the signature. In the mid-1920's firearms experts began to make use of an improved form of comparison microscope. In this the images of two bullets are fused into a single image; if both bullets have the same markings (as they would if fired from the same weapon), the markings of one will match the other.

ON JUNE 3, 1927, Major Calvin H. Goddard, who was interested in commercially exploiting this method of identification, made comparison microscope tests of Fraher Shell W and Bullet III with the test shells and bullets. It was not an official test, and Goddard's report, although furnished to the Governor and the Lowell Committee, was not made part of the published record of the case. William G. Thompson, chief counsel for Sacco and Vanzetti, was unwilling to have the test made, but a defense expert, Professor Gill of MIT, seems to have consented to it. When Thompson learned of it he arranged for Ehrmann to be there. Some newspapermen also witnessed the test. Goddard reported that the matching of the Fraher Shell and the test shells was perfect and obvious. The points of identity between Bullet III and the test bullets were less numerous because the surfaces of all the bullets were overlaid with deposits of dirt. Goddard was certain that the test showed that Bullet III was fired through Sacco's pistol and was satisfied that the defense expert agreed with this "subject . . . to the qualification that he is unwilling to commit himself to a formal opinion until he

has had an opportunity to examine the . . . bullets once more, after they have been . . . cleaned."

Thompson refused to permit the cleaning, and Gill severed his connection with the defense. Goddard's report was published in the Boston *Evening Transcript* on August 9, 1927. The statement in it that Gill agreed with him on the bullet as well as the shell was, as far as I know, never denied by either Thompson or Gill.

William G. Thompson, a conservative Boston lawyer of excellent reputation who had tried to avoid taking the case when the Western radical, Fred Moore, resigned, had become so convinced of his clients' innocence that he adopted the hypothesis that Fraher Shell W and Bullet III were not genuine. The police must have fired a bullet through Sacco's Colt, marked it with three parallel scratches and substituted it for the bullet actually extracted and marked by Dr. Magrath. It was a desperate theory to advance, for it made it clear that Sacco could be innocent only if the Commonwealth itself was guilty of a grave crime. In the Advisory Committee's long report, President Lowell could not even pretend to discuss Ehrmann's ingenious arguments (unfortunately not repeated or elaborated in his book) on the question of substitution.

Ehrmann stated that Bullet III, instead of showing the clean parallel lines of the other bullets, "seemed . . . even to the naked eye, to be marked by a clumsier hand and blunter instrument." It is possible that as the bullets were taken out at different times a different instrument might have been used by the medical examiner to mark Bullet III; also, it was the only Winchester bullet and may have been of a different alloy than the others. At the trial Dr. Magrath had described how he had marked the bullets, and as they were put into evidence he had looked, if only casually, at the marking on each. The Assistant District Attorney offered to call Dr. Magrath before the Lowell Committee to examine Bullet III again if the defense wanted him to, but no one asked him to come.

Sacco, or a bandit resembling him, was described by some witnesses as pumping bullets into Berardelli, and there were four bullets in his body. Yet only one, Bullet III, was fired from a Colt, and there is no evi-

dence that the bandit used more than one weapon. Bullet III, therefore, could not have been fired by the bandit and must be a substitution. This is an interesting argument, but it assumes that eyewitness accounts of a shooting seen briefly and under stress are reliable; in fact, the chance of error is great, as the defense had always pointed out in connection with the identification of Sacco. Actually, the testimony is not uniform that only one bandit attacked Berardelli. At the inquest a shoe worker who was not called later by either side, and at the trial a witness, Langlois, said that two men were shooting at Berardelli.

WE MAY AGREE with defense counsel that police and prosecution methods are in general unscrupulous and that they were in this case. It may well be that improper methods were used by the police and improper pressure exerted on witnesses by the District Attorney to obtain identification of Sacco and Vanzetti. The police may even have fired bullets into the bandit car and created the holes that were not seen when the car was first found and examined (although why the police should do this is difficult to understand). This may show that the will to be wicked and to tamper with Bullet III existed. However, the known conduct of the police with respect to Bullet III—Captain Proctor's testimony at the trial that has been so criticized—seems to me to be fatal to the theory of substitution.

If the police themselves created Bullet III, the one certain thing about it was that it was actually fired through Sacco's pistol. One would expect Captain Proctor to state this positively and unequivocally. It is true that the Judge and the defense at the trial were misled into believing that he had testified to this effect, but it was still an unnecessary risk for him to say only that it was consistent with having been fired from Sacco's pistol.

In 1923, at the time of the Hamilton motion, Captain Proctor, to help the defense, gave an affidavit which made it clear that at the trial he had intended to be misleading. The District Attorney, he said, had asked him repeatedly if he could find evidence that the bullet came from Sacco's pistol; he could not, and it was then arranged that he should give the answer which

he actually made at the trial. In his affidavit he said that he had no evidence that the bullet was fired through Sacco's Colt, and off the record he may have said that his actual opinion was that it was not and that he did not "want to see a couple of fellows go to the chair for something I don't think they did." But both in his affidavit and off the record he stated that he still believed it was fired through some Colt.

Thompson thought that this statement showed Proctor's consciousness of guilt and considered the affidavit as an attempt at reparation that concealed the actual wrong that had been done. But if there is one thing that the Sacco-Vanzetti case should teach us about consciousness of guilt, it is that a man showing it may be admitting guilt, but it ought not be taken as proof that the greater of two possible crimes is the one that he is admitting.

Both Bullet III and six of the bullets that Sacco had when arrested were Winchesters of a type no longer manufactured by that company in 1920. (They had a knurled cannellure—a groove with raised millings around the bullets' circumference.) At the trial neither side mentioned this coincidence; it was a defense expert who brought out the fact that Bullet III was of an obsolete type difficult to buy. He was justifying not having used Winchesters in his tests, and he made it seem as if it had been impossible to find the knurled type.

The Lowell Committee in its report and some of the jurors at the trial itself, if their memory thirty years later is accurate, found in the obsolescence of the bullets strong evidence of Sacco's guilt. I believe that they gave it undue significance, for there is no proof on how difficult it was to buy this type of Winchester at the time of the murder, which was more than a year before the trial. The coincidence of the obsolete bullets is nevertheless so persuasive that it is surprising that Katzmann overlooked it completely. It is, however, much more surprising and difficult to believe that if the police by a substitution of bullets had deliberately created the coincidence, they would have neglected to exploit it and would have left it to the shrewdness of the jury to note the identity of type and to the defense to bring out the obsolescence.

A substitution after the trial, for all

that it would then make the Sacco-Vanzetti case exactly like the Dreyfus Affair, is a very unlikely hypothesis. It would mean that the police had felt the need to get rid of a genuine Colt-fired bullet on which a successful claim of identification had been based and which had been examined thoroughly by the defense experts. The risk of exposure seems too great and the advantage to be gained too little to assume a substitution for the purpose of defeating the Hamilton motion. If the police had any doubts about Bullet III, we can imagine them in a panic in 1927 when the Goddard test was proposed and the case was stirring the civilized world. It seems clear, however, that no substitution was made then; the deposits of dirt whose authenticity was not questioned by the defense indicate that the bullet had been fired years ago.

As substitution at any time seems unlikely, what Major Goddard had in his comparison microscope was probably the actual Bullet III, the mortal bullet taken from Berardelli's body. As it matched the test bullets, it would seem, like them, to have been fired from Sacco's pistol; presumably, despite the weakness and unsatisfactoriness of the evidence identifying him, despite his alibi, despite Madeiros's confession, the mortal bullet was fired by Sacco.*

IF BULLET III IS GENUINE, we are forced to conclude that Sacco was not in Boston on the fifteenth and that Joe Morelli was not in Braintree that day. The first conclusion is not too difficult to accept. The witnesses who testified on the alibi give the impression of testifying truthfully to an actual meeting with Sacco and of believing honestly that it was on the fifteenth. But memory of the dates of casual incidents in one's own life is likely to be extremely uncertain unless the associations by which we remember the incident have some necessary connection with the date itself. It does no real violence to probability to decide that the witnesses were remembering an actual meeting with Sacco in Boston, but were mistaken in their recollection of the date.

The more difficult conclusion is the one about Joe Morelli. His resemblance to Sacco is so striking and his gang is so likely to have learned about pay-day at the South Braintree shoe factories, that, as Ehrmann says,

it is "not within the laws of chance that Madeiros could invent a story that implicated" Morelli. This, I believe, is the soundest clue to Madeiros's confession if it is false: it is not a *chance* invention; it has taken the form it has from the facts of Madeiros's life. The Lowell Committee has suggested that his later living near the site of one of the incidents of the escape explains how he learned about it. This may also explain how he learned about the two cars which he said were used, for according to his story the change from one car to the other took place in a woods in this same neighborhood. (The use of two cars was not testified to at the trial but is very plausible.) We can imagine him from his special knowledge of the South Braintree crime feeling a connection with it and boasting to his confederates in his own crimes of actual participation in it. Naming as its leader Joe Morelli, whom he knew and who resembled Sacco, would make his claim of participation plausible to his confederates and to himself. He seems to have had a grudge against Morelli and this may be why, after meeting Sacco in Dedham jail and sympathizing with his family, he hinted so broadly at the Morellis' guilt.

This is all pure speculation offered not as proof but as an attempt at reconciling the hypothesis of Sacco's guilt with Madeiros's confession. Any attempt at reconciling all of the evidence in the Sacco-Vanzetti case

* The textbooks on firearms identification state that the comparison microscope method is still used today. It is worthless, of course, if there has been a mix-up or substitution of bullets, hence my long review in so short a piece of the question of substitution. Major Goddard was, I believe, guilty of a mix-up in November 1927 in a Cleveland murder. He found that a fatal bullet matched a test bullet fired from the pistol of the murder suspect, when in fact it turned out that the pistol had not been sold by the manufacturer until after the murder. What apparently happened was that *two* fatal bullets and some test bullets were sent to Goddard and he matched the two fatal bullets with each other. That they matched showed that the comparison method worked. I mention this incident because an article in the *Nation*, justly criticizing Goddard for claiming infallibility for a method subject to human error, has by its title, "A Sacco Revolver Expert Revealed," created the belief in some that the method itself was proved to be wrong. The possibility of a mix-up at the test of June 3, 1927, would seem to be excluded by the pressure of Gill, Ehrmann, and the other witnesses.

is bound to be labored; whatever conclusion we adopt, all the facts will never lie comfortably side by side no matter how much we try to make them fit each other. In defense of my explanation I can only suggest that if we turn the hypothesis around and assume that Madeiros's story is true and that Sacco is innocent, we will have even greater trouble in explaining away the inconsistent facts and reconciling Joe Morelli's Colt with Bullet III.

SACCO AND VANZETTI's defenders have always urged as their strongest argument that it is impossible for these two men to have committed this sordid crime; it is utterly inconsistent with their characters. Great weight must be given to this sense of impossibility felt by those who knew the men well and by those who had only met them. Ehrmann is "firmly convinced that Sacco and Vanzetti not only did not, but that they could not, commit the crimes for which they were put to death." For Philip Stong: "Of course fifteen minutes with Sacco and Vanzetti was quite enough to show me the complete absurdity of attributing any murder to them. . . ."

In part perhaps because it seems to fit in with their characters, Sacco and Vanzetti are often regarded as holding a harmless, mildly eccentric, utopian belief in the natural goodness of man and as being completely opposed to violence in all forms and under all circumstances. These views, which have been cited as proof of their innocence and which would be if they were theirs, are not the views they actually held. Sacco and Vanzetti were followers of Luigi Galleani, who approved not only of the traditional propaganda of the deed, killing kings and heads of state, which we associate with some anarchists, but who also justified robberies and thefts if they were committed for the cause.

Proudhon had said, "Property is theft," and some of his followers found it proper on some occasions to take this literally. They asserted, to use Galleani's words, ". . . the right to expropriate the bourgeoisie—which lives by theft—whenever need presses or the struggle against the evil social order demands it." Clement Duval, arguing in the 1880's that stealing from the bourgeoisie was a legitimate way of making war against

them, was at first regarded by his fellow anarchists as an *agent provocateur*; ultimately he gathered a band around him. For breaking into a rich woman's house, stealing her jewels, and burning her furniture—the vandalism was probably his followers'—Duval was sent to Guiana. Ravachol, one of the saints of anarchism because he bombed the homes of judges who had been cruel to anarchists, was most likely guilty of three or four murders committed in the course of his thefts; his followers admit only one, the least atrocious—strangling an old miser to death.

The most sensational of the anarchist criminal groups was the Bonnot Gang or "the tragic bandits." In December 1911, members of this group attacked two bank messengers on a Paris street, shot one in the back, grabbed their bags, jumped into a waiting auto and drove off. This crime, apparently the world's first automobile holdup murder, initiated a series of reckless killings. When the group was tried in 1913, the *New York Times* gave more space to the trial than it gave eight years later to the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti. The *Times* was sure editorially that the anarchism professed by the defendants was only "an excuse to live without work and their chief difference from ordinary thieves lies in a certain unusual bloodthirstiness." But while it is possible to believe of these young men (as it never is of Sacco or Vanzetti) that a taste for violence may have helped form their faith, there is no reason to doubt their profession of it. Some had worked as composers on an anarchist journal and were friends of its editor; some were water-drinkers; some vegetarians; one, a poet, explained the relation of his views to Kropotkin's; one read during the trial *The Life of Jesus by Renan*, who, as Vanzetti noted later, "said that Christ was a 'political anarchist.'"

How Galleani regarded the Bonnot Gang I do not know, as I have been unable to find the contemporary issues of his journal, *Cronaca Sovversiva*. He did speak well of Duval and Ravachol. Most significant is the fact that when Duval escaped from Guiana to the United States, he wrote, at Galleani's suggestion, prison memoirs which Galleani translated from French into Italian and published in *Cronaca Sovversiva* with his own biographical sketch of Duval, justi-

fying the French anarchist's life. In 1917, Galleani's sketch of Duval and part of Duval's memoirs were published as a book. The editor of this beautiful red and white volume was Andrea Salsedo, the friend of Sacco and Vanzetti, whose dreadful death three years later was to shock them so.

SACCO AND VANZETTI'S own views are known to us not only from their master, Galleani, but from Vanzetti's petition to the Governor of May 3, 1927. (Sacco refused to sign it—he had decided that it was hopeless to deal with the government any longer—but we are assured by his lawyers that every phrase of it represents his views.) The petition, which denies that the two men have ever committed any act of violence, is remarkably frank. Acts of violence have been committed sometimes by anarchists, "But they were impelled by persecution and self-defense . . . provoked by violence, oppression, and intolerance on the part of persons in power . . . moved by sincere intentions caused by their deep sympathy [for] . . . human suffering . . . their feeling of helplessness to right in any other way the injustice inflicted upon them, their friends and the people. . . . On principle we abhor violence, deeming it the worst form of coercion and authority. We are with Garibaldi, 'Only the slaves have the right to violence to free themselves; only the violence that frees is legitimate and holy.'"

When we turn from this statement to the conditions existing in 1920 we find that they are the very conditions which they state would justify violence on behalf of themselves and their friends. The White Terror was for them not a propaganda phrase but a reality. It was reported to them almost daily that their friends were being persecuted, arrested, held incommunicado, tortured, driven to suicide as some of the deportees were, and—it was to be feared—would be actually murdered. They had the right to defend themselves; and defense was bound to be expensive. When a thousand radicals were seized illegally for deportation, just to file a petition for *habeas corpus* cost fifteen dollars a person, and this would be only the beginning of a long costly process.

Under the views of this anarchist group theft with violence was a legitimate means, and under the existing situation, a necessary

practical means of self-defense in the war waged against them by society. Killing the innocent is one of the risks, one of the inevitable consequences, of waging just wars; it is a consequence which we have learned to assume almost casually and which the anarchists in their time learned to accept, some compassionately, some with brutal joy.

While the Braintree murder is unthinkable as a personal theft of Sacco's, I am suggesting that it is possible to understand it as an act of war, a step in the raising of a defense fund. This hypothesis explains much that is inexplicable in an ordinary theft. None of the money could be found on Sacco, because he would keep none. To have kept a penny would have made a noble act a sordid wrong. The confederates in the deed were high-minded idealists who would never betray one another, so that it is entirely plausible—I believe that Vanzetti is innocent—that only one of them, Sacco, should be found. The comment has been made that it was absurd to believe that these men who had killed on the open street in the daytime would arrange to speak at a public meeting on May 9. But only Vanzetti—an innocent man by my theory—was to speak; as Sacco would be out of the country, the absurdity disappears.

The figure of speech, war, which taken fairly literally seems to be the clue to the Braintree deed, may also explain how Sacco, if he was guilty of the deed, can be so sincere and convincing in his claim of innocence and never for a moment in his public statements in court or in his private letters seem to be a conscious murderer. For if he did commit the deed, he would no more feel guilty of murder than would a soldier defending his country. It is as "good soldiers of the revolution" that he refers to Vanzetti and himself on that bitter day when he writes to his friends and comrades that the Governor has denied a pardon.

The assertion of innocence by a revolutionary is only in part a tactic of defense. It is often made when there can be no question of the mere fact of the matter and is an assertion of the right to be judged by revolutionary and not by our standards. When Galleani can describe Clement Duval's thefts in detail and without palliation, and yet say that he was condemned "for an act of revolt and justice," the great anarchist is

speaking obviously in terms of a system of rights and wrongs entirely different from ours, a system whose words sound like ours but mean something else. It is, I believe, by the standards of this other system—and not dishonestly by ours—that Sacco spoke of his innocence through the years.

In the court proceedings, and in speaking to his supporters, Sacco, of course, did something more than assert innocence in general terms; he claimed he was in Boston and not in Braintree on the day of the murder. The only other specific denial of killing which, as far as I have found, was ever made by Sacco was when he was under observation at Boston Psychopathic Hospital in 1923 and told the doctors, "I never kill anybody." But the hospital doctors, like the courts, were a part of that system of authority to which he could have felt no obligation to speak the truth. (He had even been warned by his lawyer against speaking in the latter's absence to hospital personnel and seems to have softened his views for the occasion. "He is a Socialist, but not a revolutionary," the doctors report.)

IN WRITING to his comrades and his friends, publicly or privately, Sacco never in any letter that I have seen specifically denies the killing. Innocent, not guilty, frame-up, cruel inquisition, ferocious unfeeling persecution, unjust death, ignominious execution, monstrous case, iniquitous sentence—these and similar general terms, all suitable for a revolutionary who has committed the act, are what he uses. Even if we apply our meanings to his terms, the first three terms that I have set forth are the only ones that necessarily imply innocence; the others might all be used in our own world of discourse to describe his case if he were guilty. It may be significant that none of these first three terms seems ever to have been used by him after he was sentenced on April 9, 1927, not even in his beautiful letters to his children. No word of his innocence was spoken at the solemn great moment of his death, when he cried out long life to anarchy and bade farewell to his wife, children, and friends, who were not there, and to his mother, who had died seven years before his ordeal had begun.

Vanzetti's letters throughout, his statements on being sentenced and afterward, to the very moment of death, are startlingly

different from Sacco's in the unmistakable explicitness of Vanzetti's assertions of innocence and denials of guilt. In the very first letter he writes after his conviction he says, "I did not spittel a drop of blood, or steal a cent in all my life," a statement that he repeats in one form or another but with the same force in later letters and when sentenced. When he reports proudly that his young friend, Beltrando Brini, is going to Harvard, he can also mention easily how five years before as a boy Beltrando had testified to selling fish with him in Plymouth on the day he was supposed to be in Bridgewater at the holdup. He describes to a friend what he was doing and to whom he was speaking at the very hour of the Braintree crime and how positive these people are of his innocence. When his words are general he excludes all possibility of revolutionary ambiguity: "I am utterly innocent in the whole sense of the word." And at the moment of death, after shaking hands with the warden and guards as with friends, he uses his most moving formulation; to those present he said, "I wish to tell you that I am an innocent man. I never committed any crime, but sometimes some sin."

It is possible that a man like Vanzetti could have been so specific, so clear, so bold in his private denials, the ones he did not have to make, and still be guilty, but it is unlikely. The sense, whether true or false, of Vanzetti's innocence radiates so profusely through the pages of his fine letters and magnificent statements that we read Sacco's in their light. This keeps us from realizing that Sacco has been parsimonious even in general expressions of his own innocence and generous only in the use of terms that do not necessarily imply it. Injustice there has been for he has been unfairly tried, persecution for he has been hated, inquisition in his cruel cross-examination, ignominy and iniquity in a death sentence so long delayed and once near the end so brutally reprieved. Innocence he has spoken of as only an anarchist would, and even these general terms he has dropped toward the end, as if when death was near he felt it unbecoming as a truthful man to use such ambiguous terms with friends. One would expect that Sacco, warmhearted, sentimental, affectionate, a simple man if innocent, surely would in the seven years have written once if innocent

one of those simple, clear statements that came so naturally to Vanzetti and whose meaning cannot possibly be subject to doubt or argued away.

VANZETTI'S STATEMENTS in his letters to his friends seem to me affirmative proof of his innocence. But if we ignore them entirely, the evidence against him is not strong. The identification by four witnesses might be sufficient to find that he was at the Braintree crime if we start with the presumption of guilt, which is both bad law and bad sense. Yet this is in a sense where we really start when a witness identifies a man who he knows has already been arrested for the crime. There is the likelihood—or at least we prefer to believe that there should be—that if a man is arrested he is guilty. A witness exercising his honest judgment may well feel, consciously or unconsciously, that a responsible and persuasive identification has already been made which cannot be ignored. Two of the four witnesses identifying Vanzetti did so after he had been found guilty of the Bridgewater attempt, a crime of the same type as the Braintree. One of these witnesses did pick him out of a line-up, but this line-up, one of the few used by the police in the Sacco-Vanzetti case, had no protective value, for the witness had seen Vanzetti's picture in the newspapers.

The only significant claim against Vanzetti is that his .38 H&R revolver, a common, inexpensive weapon of which there were so many thousands in existence, had been taken from the dying Berardelli by one of the bandits and given to Vanzetti (whom no witness placed as taking part in the shooting itself). All that supports this claim is the hypothesis—which if true would still not be decisive—that Berardelli's gun had been recently repaired by having a new hammer put in and that Vanzetti's had a new hammer in it. For this hypothesis to be true every one of the following points, which are not clear but in dispute, has to be resolved in favor of the Commonwealth: it is not clear that Vanzetti's revolver had a new hammer (a repair man said it looked as if it did, defense experts as if it didn't), or that Berardelli's had been sent to the repair shop for a hammer (it may have been for a spring), or that Berardelli's was taken out of the shop before the murder (he may have been using

a substitute), or that Berardelli's actually was a .38 H&R (it may have been a .32).

Weak as this evidence is, the evidence of guilt of the Bridgewater attempt of December 24, 1919, is even weaker. Immediately after the attempted holdup witnesses told Pinkerton detectives that the man with the shotgun had a closely cropped mustache. At the trial this description was changed in varying degrees but never completely fitted Vanzetti's luxuriant mustache, which his witnesses testified had not at any time been trimmed. For the dates of both crimes Vanzetti had plausible alibis, supported by credible witnesses. He was following his trade, selling fish: eels on December 24 to be eaten on Christmas eve, fish on Thursday, April 15, for Friday. Even if the witnesses were mistaken about the dates and the eels had been sold on the twenty-third and the fish on the fourteenth, this would not matter. For in Vanzetti's case there is no strong evidence, like the bullet in Sacco's, requiring an almost irrefutable defense to overcome it.

For all that they are inseparably linked so that it may seem absurd to try to separate them now into guilty and innocent, there has always been in those who knew the two men an awareness of a great difference in their characters. To Thompson, Sacco was a fanatic, to Ehrmann, writing after Sacco's death, he is dogged and doctrinaire; but both lawyers can speak only good of their gifted client Vanzetti. There has also been a feeling that the evidence against Sacco was stronger than that against Vanzetti, but there has usually been a reluctance to separate the two cases decisively, to find one man guilty, the other innocent. This stems from the trial itself when the question arose whether to emphasize to the jury the weakness of the case against Vanzetti, which might make more certain Sacco's conviction. Whether Vanzetti suspected or knew what lay behind the difference in evidence we can only guess, but it was Vanzetti who decided: "Save Nick. He has the woman and child."

If Sacco is to be deemed guilty it is only on the basis of post-trial proof, the Goddard test made years after the verdict and apparently not considered even by the Governor or the Lowell Committee. It is not to justify the legal proceedings but to help understand the two men and their letters that

I have mentioned the views and activities of certain anarchist groups. Historical facts like these are not, and of course, should not be, evidence that could have been used at the trial. A defendant's views or the views of his group should never be legal evidence of the commission of a specific crime, for a man's unpopular views may seem to the jurors sufficient reason to bring in a verdict against him regardless of the merits of the case that they are supposed to decide. Katzmänn stressed in his cross-examination the two defendants' avoidance of the draft and their opposition to the war, non-violent acts and views which we are certain he calculated would help convince the jury to find them guilty of a violent crime.

IF ONE OF THE two men is guilty this should not affect the value of the struggle on their behalf. One innocent man is surely worth the great effort made to win a new trial, a fair one, and so indeed would be two guilty men. Yet there is a sense of loss. It may seem to some to be of a piece with the spirit of our disenchanted age that the Goddard report, published in the newspapers in the last fortnight of the two men's lives and lost in its clamor, should now for the first time be brought out verbatim in a book accessible to all, Montgomery's *Sacco-Vanzetti*. The truth must often wait for its right time to be told, and if we accept the report, it is as if a dismal truth has waited through the decades for the dismal age in which it can be believed.

Dreyfus was never a completely satisfactory symbol; we knew him to be innocent because he was too rich to be a spy. Sacco and Vanzetti were our perfect symbols of innocence; they were poor men who be-

cause they remained poor we were sure had not stolen. We saw in their case the struggle of absolutes, the morality play of wicked government and spotless man. Why do we mind giving up this vision and admitting that perhaps government has not been flagrantly wicked, has not faked the bullet?

Politically, liberals proceed on the assumption of a simple decent human nature. But the literature of the imagination, which as enlightened people they read, has since early Conrad and late Henry James dealt in its complication, its ambiguities, has made us see that at times what we can regard as an admirable fineness, a greatness of character, can yet go with the darkest of deeds. Conrad's Kurtz with heads drying on stakes under his windows is a great man. It is of a betrayal such as we feel when we think of Sacco as a killer that James wrote: "... the horror of the thing hideously *behind*, behind so much trusted, so much pretended, nobleness . . . tenderness."

And yet the horror is only a part of the story. We have the same rights in the events of history as in those of the imagination to feel the fineness of the actor whatever the quality of the act. Sacco is still an idealist even if betrayed by the risk that inheres in all ideals, that the desire for the good may itself lead to evil, a risk that men must yet take. He is still a man bearing his agony with fortitude and dignity, although it may be an agony keener and different from what we imagined. He still goes grandly to his death, dying for his faith perhaps more literally than we thought, in simple fact a brutal, ugly murderer, but still available, as needed, as a symbol of the nobility in the heart of darkness.

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

TWO MEMOIRS

The two pieces below (translated from the Yiddish by Channah Kleinerman) are accounts of actual incidents which ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER remembers from his childhood in Warsaw. His father was a rabbi in a particularly rough quarter of the city, and a great variety of types passed in and out of the elder Singer's house, coming for rulings on points of Jewish law, for adjudication of their disputes, and for personal advice and comfort. Mr. Singer—using the evocative techniques of fiction, but keeping very close to actual fact—has written a whole series of these memoirs (of which two more will be appearing in a future issue of COMMENTARY); they were published originally in the Jewish Daily Forward and were later collected into a book under the title Mein Taten's Bes-din Shtub ("My Father's Courtroom"). Mr. Singer's newest book is The Spinoza of Market Street (Farrar, Straus and Cudahy).

A Gruesome Question

The evening after the Sabbath always had a half-holiday air in our house, especially in winter. First, Father would sit with several other men to partake of the third Sabbath meal. The room was already almost totally dark as the men sang "The Sons of the Mansion" and other Sabbath hymns. The meal usually consisted of stale challah and a piece of fish or herring. My father had long dreamed of being a rebbe—a teacher and leader of disciples—and so he would expound some portion of the Law for his audience. I stood behind his chair and listened. He put to naught all worldly pleasures, and described the joys of the righteous in Paradise—how, with crowns on their heads, they recline on thrones, while the mysteries of the Torah are revealed to them. As he spoke, the stars began to glitter in the sky, and frequently the moon would also float past. Father's words about the soul and the Throne of Glory became entwined in my imagination with the stars, with the moon's pale face, with the strange shapes of clouds. The mysteries of the Torah became one with the mysteries of this world, which I

never felt as intimately as in the last hours of the Sabbath, before the lights were lit. In the next room Mother would sit and softly murmur the prayer "God of Abraham." In these twilight hours our house was filled with God, with angels and mysteries, and with a yearning inexpressible in words.

But at last the beloved Sabbath had departed and the weekday world was resumed. The lights were lit, the men said the evening prayers, and Father recited the Grace of Valediction. All dipped their fingers in the overflowing wine and put them in their pockets for a second—a charm to insure prosperity for the coming week. If it was a winter night, Mother would immediately begin to prepare supper in the kitchen. Father chanted the blessing, "So God give thee of the dew of heaven. . ." and then repeated the tale of the poor, pious man to whom the prophet Elijah appeared in the guise of a slave, so that the man was able to sell him for 800,000 gold pieces. The stove was lit, the naphtha lamp burned. A few of the men were still there, dressed in their Sabbath clothes, drinking tea with lemon and discussing Hasidic lore and worldly topics, too. The room was fragrant with

an aroma compounded of its warmth, the wax of the braided candles, the scent of the cloves in the spice box, and miracles. My father was a smoker and he had looked forward to the moment when he could light a cigarette, or even a pipe.

On that particular Saturday night a fresh snow had fallen, and the street was luminous, as in a kind of nocturnal day. Frost-trees bloomed on the window panes and made me think of Siberia, and also of the Land of Israel.

Amidst all this bright hopefulness for the new week, full of the promise of blessings and good fortune, the door opened suddenly, and a man—a very poor man—entered. He looked not simply like a poor man, but rather like one of the paupers I had read about in books of fables. His overcoat was full of patches and rents through which one could see the dirty cotton wadding and the coarse lining. His cap was faded. His beard seemed to be frozen; I believe there were icicles hanging from it. The man brought with him the cold wind of the weekday world and the bitterness of winter.

"A good week to you, Rabbi."

"A good week and a good year. What do you wish?"

My eyes opened wide. This poor man reminded me of the tales of the thirty-six hidden saints. To me he seemed like one of those unknown water-carriers and wood-choppers upon whose righteousness the world is founded.

"Rabbi, I want to ask you a question."

"Ask."

"Rabbi, is it permissible for me to sleep with my dead wife?"

The room had suddenly grown strangely still. A shiver went through my limbs. The faces of the men grew pale. My father's face seemed to have become petrified.

"I . . . I don't know what you are talking about," he stammered at last.

"Rabbi, I am not insane," said the man. "My wife died on Friday. I live in a cellar, and the mice run over the floors.

The funeral will be tomorrow. I can't leave the body lying on the floor—the mice would get at it. I have only one bed. So she must lie on the bed. But neither can I sleep on the floor. The rats would devour me. Last night I sat up all night. But I have no more strength. Therefore, Rabbi, I must know whether I may lie down on the bed next to the dead woman. . . ."

As soon as the man had spoken these last words, I saw something in my father's face that I had never before seen. His face was literally washed in tears. There was a sudden flow and everything was wet—his eyes, his cheeks, his red beard. Among the other men there was a muttering, a turmoil. A sob seemed to burst forth from every throat. The only sounds were the scraping of chair legs over the floor, the tapping of fingers against the table. Father took out his kerchief and began to wipe his eyes and blow his nose. His voice was broken as he said, "Jews, have you heard? Woe is us, woe is us!"

"God have mercy!" exclaimed one Hasid.

"May He preserve us!" answered a second.

"Jews, why are you silent? Let us do something!"

The men had no money in the pockets of their satin coats. But they were all neighbors. Each one ran home to bring money. Father always kept his few rubles in a tin box, and he immediately opened it and took out several silver pieces. Mother in the kitchen had heard the tumult in the "big room" and came in to ask what had happened. She became pale, flushed, and grew pale again. In such moments her matron's wig would immediately become disarranged. Strands (they were made of silk, not of human hair) straggled over her forehead and cheeks. A hairpin fell on the floor. The Greek knot at her nape loosened. She ran into the kitchen and brought out refreshments for the man: tea, a cookie, the remains of our prune dessert. The pauper went

into the kitchen to wash his hands. One young man came back and said he had brought not only money but a folding bed also. Some women ran in, wrung their hands, mingled with the menfolk.

"We have to go over there!" said someone.

My father, who was of priestly descent, was not allowed to enter a house in which a corpse lay. But the others were simple Israelites. While the poor man sat and ate of the refreshments, people began to come in with gifts. One brought a quilted jacket, another an undershirt, a pair of socks, a cap. A complete outfit was quickly assembled. As soon as he had eaten and said a hurried grace, he rose to go and the group followed him. Some carried the folding bed, others the food. I went along, though I too was not allowed to go into the house with the others, for I too was, of course, a descendant of Aaron. Besides, from early childhood I had had a terrible fear of such things. Most of the people remained standing outdoors. Some started down the dark stairs. Through a small window I glimpsed a frightening scene. This was not a cellar, but rather a black pit, a deep hole dug into the earth. The walls were covered with soot like a chimney. In the darkness glimmered two candles, and on the bed lay a twisted form, covered with a blanket or a shawl. One could see nothing distinctly, because the windowpanes were almost entirely blurred over with frost and caked ice. This man actually lived *in* the earth. There, in the dark, in the cold, in the damp, in the mud, he had endured his bitter life together with his wife and with mice who waged war against him, against his body and against his crust of bread. Now they wanted to devour the pain-wracked remains of the dead.

Two emotions struggled in me. Fear ordered me to look away. Curiosity demanded another look, another glimpse. I knew that every look would have to be paid for with nightmares, with fear and trembling, with visions that suck the mar-

row from one's bones—but again and again I bent my head down to take one more look. It seemed to me that I could see ghosts, imps, goblins scampering about, hovering together in the shadows, taking on fearful shapes. Can a human being live in such an abyss? Can a man spend his days and nights here and not go mad? My scalp tightened. An icy shiver ran down my back. Perhaps this poor man was himself one of the evil spirits, a messenger from Satan's kingdom?

Men and women bustled about the room. Something was lifted. Someone moved the candles. Now I wanted to run away—but to go home alone after what I had seen was more than I could do. Someone would have to take me up our stairway, which sometimes was totally dark while at other times it was lighted only by a small oil lamp. A man said he would escort me home. I was trembling in every limb; my teeth were chattering. Something inside me wept and asked: Can God bear to look on this? . . .

When they brought me into the house, Mother smote her hands together in fright.

"Woe is me, just look at the child!"

They warmed and comforted me. Mother murmured a protective blessing. I was given tea, jam, every delicacy she could find in the kitchen. Father paced back and forth in his study. He chewed on his beard and from time to time stroked his high forehead. He was by nature a believer, but this incident had apparently awakened doubts even in him. . . .

"O, o, sweet Father! Woe, woe!" he exclaimed. "The time for Thy help has come! The time has come . . . it has come."

It was a gloomy night, and a lean week followed, for Father had given a large portion of his funds for the week to the pauper. I heard people argue that it was an almost incredible thing for any Jew to have only one bed in his home. That was the way the Gentile peasants lived; it was unheard of even among the poorest Jews. But who knows? Perhaps the other bed had recently broken? Perhaps the wood of

the second bedstead had been used as kindling to warm the cellar? Such poverty as could be found in the big city of Warsaw was not even dreamed of in the smaller towns. For a long, long time this awesome incident was talked of in our house, and I suffered with dreadful dreams and nightmares for many weeks.

Afterward, I would often see this same poor man. He did a little peddling, busied himself with errands, mingled with other people. But I was afraid of him. I could not forget his appearance that Saturday night, and his gruesome question.

Strange Merchandise

Things happen in life so fantastic that the imagination could not have invented them.

One day the door opened, and a man entered our kitchen who looked different from any Jew I had ever seen. He wore the usual rabbinic hat, but his alpaca jacket reached only to his knees, in the German style. His beard was white, but too even to have grown naturally; this beard had been trimmed by shears. His trousers were striped, his boots glistened. He also wore white earlocks. But his face was young and rosy, not at all like the face of an old man, and in his black eyes shone a youthful vitality, and a strange pensiveness, too.

"Is the reverend Rabbi at home?" he asked in heavily Germanic Yiddish.

My mother and I were not used to hearing my father called "the reverend Rabbi," but after a moment my mother realized who was meant, and she motioned the visitor into the adjoining room.

My father welcomed the man with an open-hearted greeting (as he welcomed everyone, rich or poor), and asked him to be seated. After a few minutes, my father inquired what had brought him, but the stranger was evasive. It seemed that he had come simply to chat. In his Germanized speech, he began to show off his familiarity with Jewish learning, and

I saw that my father was impressed. He apparently knew the Mishnah by heart. Naming several scholarly books, he recited lengthy passages from them. The conversation became more and more involved, and although my father was a scholar, himself the author of a number of commentaries, he could barely keep up with the man, who seemed to remember everything, even the exact pages where certain passages were to be found. He tossed out quotations from Maimonides left and right. He appeared to shake *responsa* and laws from his sleeves, and he led the conversation around to what the Aramaic translator had said about a certain Biblical verse—then he recited Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel.

My father as a rule refrained from praising a man to his face, but this time he could not hold back and exclaimed, "How can a man—may no evil befall you—have such a memory? You are indeed to be compared to 'a limed cistern that loses not a drop.'"

"Permit me to show you some affidavits. . . ."

The stranger drew out a packet of letters bearing the seals of many rabbis. Famous rabbis called him a "genius," a "Prince of the Torah," "one who uproots mountains and reduces them to dust. . . ." One rabbi attested that he had examined this man and that "his hands were filled" with the Babylonian Talmud, the Jerusalem Talmud, *Sifri*, *Safra*, *Tosefta*, *Mehilta*. . . . Father rubbed his forehead and almost smacked his lips. He said, "It is a privilege to have you in my house!"

He told me to go ask Mother to prepare tea and refreshments for our guest. Soon, Father himself came into the kitchen to tell Mother about the visitor. She was equally enthusiastic. Mother was the daughter of a renowned rabbi, and in our house learning was looked upon as the greatest wealth.

Back in my father's study, I stood with my ears cocked so as not to lose a word. Father asked the stranger where he was

from, and it turned out that he came originally from Hungary and had visited many lands—had even studied with a Sephardic *Hacham* in one of the provinces of the Turkish Empire. He had been to Palestine and had wandered as far as Damascus and Babylon—he had traversed the world. He knew several languages—not Russian, but Hungarian, German, Arabic. With great deliberation he produced an Austrian passport and showed my father the numerous visas issued by all sorts of consulates. This was the first time I heard the words “visa” and “consulate.” Generally, my father attached little value to such secular matters. But here they were combined with learning, and my father esteemed the combination of Torah and worldly glory. He called me over and ordered me to shake hands with this extraordinary man—apparently he wanted me to have this honor. The man pinched my cheek: “What are you studying?”

Then he recited by heart the passage of the Gemara that I was studying at the time, and in addition, bits of Rashi and the commentaries of the *Tosefot*.

In the meantime my mother had served tea, cookies, and fruit. She seemed almost embarrassed by the presence of this modern-looking scholar. Father told the visitor whose daughter she was, and I was pleased to hear that he knew my grandfather by reputation.

After a while he whispered something to my father, who turned to me and said, “Leave the room now.”

Mother had already gone out, and after a slight demurral I began to walk slowly toward the kitchen. I passionately desired to listen to this man’s scholarly Germanic speech, but such was the way of adults that as soon as the conversation became involved, and every word drew me like a magnet, they would suddenly decide to send “the boy” away. I left the door slightly ajar as I went out, but the stranger himself walked over and closed it tight. Obviously, he had an extraordinary secret to confide.

In the kitchen, Mother began to lecture me. “How does one become a scholar like that?” she argued. “By studying, not by being idle. But, instead of studying, you read foolish storybooks, about things that never were and never will be.” Then she told me a story she had read in a newspaper. A professor had a wife who never had dinner ready on time. Every day he had to sit and wait. Suddenly it occurred to him that he could utilize this time. He began to write a book, and a few years later published a work which he had composed entirely in the time spent waiting for his dinner. Now, if scholars can show such diligence in secular knowledge—for which there is no divine reward—how much more important is such effort in the study of Torah? One can become a scholar and at the same time attain merit for the Hereafter.

Mother’s words made a deep impression upon me. Yet I was also filled with curiosity as to what the stranger from those faraway lands was telling my father so secretly. Through the closed door I could hear whispering, mumbling, sighs. I even thought that I heard a stifled cry. The voice was my father’s, and it sounded as though he were angry at someone, barely restraining himself from breaking into a rage. But why would Father be angry at that man? What was going on? Mother, too, began to look puzzled. The voices from the study were rising higher and higher, and there was no longer any doubt that a dispute—indeed a quarrel—was taking place. Could they be arguing so heatedly about a passage from the Gemara? Or over the interpretation of a law? It did not seem likely. Mother went over to the door and tried to listen. Then she said, almost resentfully, “Why is your father shouting?”

Suddenly the door was flung open by my father. I had never seen him so flushed and disheveled. His forehead was covered with beads of sweat. His red beard and his earlocks, which were nearly black, quivered. Confusion, dismay, and fright

were apparent in his eyes. He said to Mother: "Give me some money quick!"

"How much do you need?"

"As much as you have."

Mother was upset. "But I cannot give away my last groshen!"

"I beg of you, don't keep me waiting. I don't want that vile creature in my house another minute! May his name and memory be wiped out. . . ."

"What happened? Why is he vile?"

"Give me the money—if not, I'll leave the house at once! His very presence defiles. . . ."

Tears came to my eyes. Mother with trembling fingers began to search in the drawer of the kitchen table. I could see our visitor through the open door. He stood in the center of the study, plucking at his beard and examining our oil lamp. My father returned to argue with him a while longer. Then the door of the study opened again and the stranger came out. He looked at my mother and said, in his precise neo-German, "Good day."

The minute he had gone, Father stormed into the kitchen and cried out:

"Woe is us—such a thing has not been heard of since the days of the Creation! The man is a heretic—a spiteful apostate—an insolent heathen—a willful sinner! Such learning—yet he is the lowest of curs!"

"Why are you shouting so? What did he want of you?"

"He came to sell me Eternal Life. . . ."
Father's voice sounded strange.

"What?"

"Yes, you heard. He wanted to sell me his share in the Hereafter for a hundred rubles."

"He must be a lunatic!"

"Not a lunatic, but an atheist! A total unbeliever! An Elisha ben Abuya!"

And my father, so agitated that he was barely able to get his words out, told how the man had made an offer. By amassing so much knowledge of Torah and sacred lore, he had won for himself a large portion of Eternal Life, which he had come

to sell to my father. To my father's warning that an unbeliever has no share at all in the Hereafter, the visitor cited Talmudic passages to prove otherwise: that his learning *had* earned him a share in the World-to-Come, and that it was permitted to sell this share. Since he needed the money, he argued, and since he himself did not believe in life after death, he was willing to do business with his portion.

Mother looked at Father reproachfully. "And why did you give him our last few rubles?"

"I had to get rid of him. He threatened that he would not leave the house without the money. . . ."

"But how shall I prepare for the Sabbath now?"

Father did not know what to say. He ran to the sink and washed his hands, as though to wash off defilement. He remained standing, his head bowed, confused, almost as though he had been struck. So much learning—and such heresy! Such a scholar—and a reprobate! Esau had exchanged his right of the first-born for a mess of pottage, and this scoundrel was prepared to throw away Eternal Life for a few rubles. . . . "World's end! World's end!" my father muttered to himself. "How many days are left him on this earth? He is already an old man. . . ."

Then he looked scowlingly at me and added, "Let this be a lesson to you!"

Soon we heard that the stranger had visited all the rabbis, scholars, and men of substance of Warsaw, offering to each the same unholy deal. Everywhere he had been given at least a few rubles. This was a shnorrer who practiced psychology on his victims: first he inspired admiration, then anger, abhorrence, fear, and finally he let himself be paid off just for going away. It was even rumored that here and there he had snared a rich fool who had paid the hundred rubles he demanded for his portion of the Hereafter. With such merchandise did he make his way through the world.

THE TROUBLE WITH KENNEDY

HANS J. MORGENTHAU

ON SEPTEMBER 30 of last year, the eminent French sociologist and columnist Raymond Aron addressed in *Le Figaro* an open letter to President Kennedy. This letter is both a moving and an important document. It is moving because it is written with sympathy and concern by a man who calls himself an "enthusiastic partisan" of the President. It is important because it raises one of the two great issues of government which will ruin the Kennedy administration and perhaps the country if the President does not meet them successfully.

Mr. Aron addresses himself to the President's method of deciding issues of foreign policy, taking as his point of departure the invasion of Cuba. The President had to choose between two incompatible courses of action suggested by his advisers: to stage an invasion of Cuba, with American military support if necessary, or not to intervene. In order to avoid the risks which either course of action, consistently pursued, would have entailed, the President tried to steer a middle course, intervening just a little bit but not enough to assure success. Confronted with a choice between black and white, he chose gray. "Yet in foreign policy," as Mr. Aron puts it, "the half-measure, the compromise ordinarily combines the disadvantages of the two possible policies."

Mr. Aron was, and perhaps still is, afraid that the President might repeat this error in his approach to the Berlin crisis. For here again, the President must choose between counsels recommending diametrically opposed courses of action: a negotiated settlement which is bound to weaken the Amer-

ican position in West Berlin and West Germany, and an intransigent position which, at the very least for the immediate future, increases the risks of war. As Mr. Aron sees it, the President has chosen, at least in theory, the "hard" line; yet in his style, method, and language he has committed himself also to "flexibility." In consequence, nobody can be sure whether Mr. Kennedy intends to play the role of Churchill or of Chamberlain. Nobody—the American people, our allies, probably Mr. Khrushchev himself—knows what our negotiating position is, assuming we have one.

Mr. Aron did not answer the question: What has been the matter with Kennedy? For the indecisiveness of the Cuban intervention and the apparent indecisiveness of Mr. Kennedy's approach to the Berlin crisis are but the manifestations of a deficiency which is deeply embedded in the President's experience and personality. To put it bluntly: the President does not know what the statesman's task is while he knows only too well the politician's, and thus he endeavors to accomplish the task of the statesman with the tools of the politician. Yet the virtues of the politician can easily become vices when they are brought to bear upon the statesman's task.

The decision of the statesman has three distinctive qualities. It is a commitment to action. It is a commitment to a particular action that precludes all other courses of action. It is a decision taken in the face of the unknown and the unknowable.

The politician can take words for deeds, and insofar as his words seek to influence people to vote for him or for his measures,

his words actually are deeds. He can make promises without keeping them, and his promises may not even be expected to be kept. He can run on a platform every two or four years and take his stand on quite different ground in between. He can equivocate between different courses of action and bridge the chasm between incompatible positions by embracing them both. He can vote one way today and another way tomorrow, and if he can't make up his mind he can abstain from voting. He can try to reduce to a minimum the uncertainties of the future by preparing his action with proper attention to the facts, organization, and planning.

The statesman, especially in his dealings with other nations, can hardly ever afford to do any of these things. His rhetoric is verbalized action, an explanation of deeds done or a foretaste of deeds to come. What still moves us today in the recorded oratory of a Churchill or a Roosevelt is not so much the literary quality per se as the organic connection between the words and the deeds. Listening to those words, we remember the deeds, and we are moved.

The statesman must commit himself to a particular course of action to the exclusion of all others. He must cross the Rubicon or refrain from crossing it, but he cannot have it both ways. If he goes forward he takes certain risks, and if he stands still he takes other risks. There is no riskless middle ground. Nor can he, recoiling before the risks of one course of action, retrace his steps and try some other tack, promising risks different and fewer. He has crossed the Rubicon and cannot undo that crossing.

The statesman must cross the Rubicon not knowing how deep and turbulent the river is, nor what he will find on the other side. He must commit himself to a particular course of action in ignorance of its consequences, and he must be capable of acting decisively in spite of that ignorance. He must be capable of staking the fate of the nation upon a hunch. He must face the impenetrable darkness of the future and still not flinch from walking into it, drawing the nation behind him. Rather than seeking unattainable knowledge, he must reconcile himself to ineluctable ignorance. His is the leading part in a tragedy, and he must act the part.

THE EXTENT to which the style of the Kennedy administration resembles the politician's rather than the statesman's is revealed not only by the policies it has pursued but more particularly by its mode of operation. Rhetoric has been divorced from action and has tended to be taken as a substitute for it. To give only one glaring example: last July, the President committed himself in a speech to a program of fallout shelters, without having a policy. Ever since, his aides have searched for a sensible policy which would not be too much at variance with the President's words.

Yet the President cannot help making decisions and the method by which he has reached them suffers from three defects. It is informal to the point of being haphazard. It tends to lose sight of the distinction between what is paramount and must be decided by the President and nobody else, and what is only important enough to be decided not by the President but by somebody else. It has the quality of indecisiveness because it vainly seeks a certainty that is beyond its reach.

The President has wisely discarded the committee system through which his predecessor governed, shielding him from direct contact with the issues in all their complexity. Yet he has unwisely replaced this system with another one that threatens to overwhelm him with an unmanageable variety of issues and opinions.

The President exposes himself deliberately to advice from a great variety of sources. These sources are generally individuals who talk to him at length in his office or over the phone. This system, or lack of it, has the virtue of making the President familiar with all shades of opinion. It has the double vice of making it either too easy or too difficult for the President to make up his mind.

The President may well be swayed by a particular counsel, especially when it is presented with that subjective self-assurance which some mistake for objective certainty, and with that facility for expression and brilliance of formulation which some mistake for depth. Impressed with these qualities of form, he may commit himself to the substance of the advice without being fully aware of the meaning of that commitment. It has been reported on good authority that the President was once presented with advice concerning a policy of capital impor-

tance. He approved of that policy orally and asked the individual concerned to instruct the head of the department within whose jurisdiction the policy fell to put it into operation. This was done. When the head of the department some weeks later informed the President of the progress made in the execution of that policy, the President questioned its wisdom, obviously unaware that he had approved it and ordered its execution.

This casualness of policy formation puts two obstacles in the way of the President's making up his mind. Counseling on the spur of the moment with all kinds of people on all kinds of issues, the President is overwhelmed with issues to be decided and advice to be weighed. In consequence, his mind can no longer perceive clearly the vital distinction between the paramount issues he alone must settle, and the merely important ones which others may decide with or without his guidance. The President has lost sight of the natural relationship that exists between the gravity of the issue to be decided and the level of authority that decides it. Thus some paramount issues will remain unattended or will be ineffectually attended to by officials lacking sufficient authority, while the President will concern himself with secondary issues which could be more effectively disposed of by subordinate authorities.

Thus it has come about after many months of deliberations by a great many officials that if we have a policy with regard to Berlin, neither the American public nor the allies of the United States are aware of it. The *New York Times* could publish on October 21 a report from Washington under the headline "Allied Confusion Stalls Thompson. Envoy Unable to Get Clear Stand for Moscow Talks." The result is not only confusion but also the surrender of the determination of policy to some other nation whose interests may or may not coincide with those of the United States. Thus, again, the *Times* reported on October 26 as the official position of the United States government that "the United States could not get nearer to war than the West Germans wish to go, and could not get nearer to peace than they were willing to go." Many months of contingency planning did not prepare the administration for the pos-

sibility that the East Germans might effectively seal East Berlin off by erecting a wall. Hence the administration did not know what to do when the wall went up in August, and did nothing. The show of force through which the United States in October tried to maintain the status quo concerning the access of its military personnel to East Berlin ended in confused retreat.

THE PRESIDENT must overcome the indecisiveness of his own mind. That mind seeks the predictability to which it is accustomed from domestic politics. There meticulous ascertainment of the facts, precise planning, and elaborate organization years in advance paid off in victory in the primaries, the nominating convention, and the elections. To be sure, a margin of uncertainty remained, but it was small compared with what one knew, had prepared and planned for.

The President searches for the same kind of certainty in his conduct of foreign policy. He tries to eliminate the darkness of ignorance and to probe the depth of uncertainty that even so astute a mind as his cannot penetrate, by drawing upon the most luminous and knowledgeable minds he can find and by making use of all the information he can lay his hands on. Yet those dark spots on the landscape of foreign policy are impervious to the most brilliant intelligence, and factual knowledge cannot prevail against them. Thus the President's mind hesitates and his will falters when he seeks the answer to the riddle in more advice and additional information.

The frantic search for advice and information performs for the President the same function the employment of astrologers and soothsayers did for the princes of old: to create the illusion of certainty where there can be no certainty. The more facile the President's advisers are with words and the more self-assured they are in their convictions, the more adept they are in encouraging the President in such futile search. They cannot give him what he needs more than anything else: the tragic sense of politics. In view of that need, he could do worse than add to the ranks of his advisers a philosopher who would remind him at regular intervals that there are more questions than answers and that the great de-

cisions must be made in ignorance and without certitude. The President, who knows his history, will remember that the princes of old reserved a place among their advisers for a man who called their attention to the limits of their power beyond which there is the realm of Providence and fate.

This particular issue of government stems from the President's personal approach to his task. He has created it; it has never before in American history appeared in this way and is not likely to appear so again. The other issue of government with which the President must come to terms is inherent in the American system. All Presidents have had to face it and live with it one way or another. It concerns the relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy.

The issue is posed by the incompatibility between the rational requirements of sound foreign policy and the emotional preferences of a democratically controlled public opinion. As Tocqueville put it with special reference to the United States:

Foreign politics demand scarcely any of those qualities which are peculiar to a democracy; they require, on the contrary, the perfect use of almost all those in which it is deficient. Democracy is favorable to the increase of the internal resources of a state; it diffuses wealth and comfort, promotes public spirit, and fortifies the respect for law in all classes of society: all these are advantages which have only an indirect influence over the relations which one people bears to another. But a democracy can only with great difficulty regulate the details of an important undertaking, persevere in a fixed design, and work out its execution in spite of serious obstacles. It cannot combine its measures with secrecy or await their consequences with patience. . . .

The propensity that induces democracies to obey impulse rather than prudence, and to abandon mature design for the gratification of momentary passion, was clearly seen in America on the breaking out of the French Revolution.

Confronted with this dilemma between the requirements of good foreign policy and the preferences of public opinion, the President has the supreme task of reconciling the two. The dilemma is tragic because it

can never be fully resolved. If the President pursues uncompromisingly the foreign policy he regards to be sound, as Woodrow Wilson did, he risks losing the support of opinion at home; if he accommodates himself to that opinion at the expense of what sound foreign policy requires, he risks jeopardizing the interests of the country. In order to be able to avoid these two extremes—the one fatal to his personal power, the other fatal to the power of the nation—the President must perform the two historic functions of his office: to be the educator of the people and the conciliator of seemingly irreconcilable positions. The President must impress upon the people the requirements of sound foreign policy by telling them the facts of political life and what they require of the nation, and then strike a compromise which leaves the essence of sound foreign policy intact while assuaging domestic opinion.

IT IS THE measure of Mr. Kennedy's failure that he has performed neither task. Instead, substituting again the politician's concerns for the statesman's, he has tended to subordinate the requirements of sound foreign policy to the requirement of winning elections in 1962 and 1964. The President knows that our Far Eastern policy has so far failed to result in catastrophe not because it is sound but because of circumstances which are likely to change drastically to our disadvantage. The President knows that what we call our German policy has been for fifteen years a verbal commitment to the illusion of unification rather than a policy. But the great mass of the American people know nothing of this because the President has not dared to tell them. To return to the fallout shelters: not only did the President commit himself in words to a fallout shelter program before he had a policy, but he now has committed himself to a policy in order to be able to compete in 1962 and 1964 with Mr. Rockefeller who has developed such a policy for the state of New York.

Yet the President, with his sense and knowledge of history, and groping as he does for his proper place in the scheme of things, cannot but feel where his true mission lies.

It is for the President to reassert his historic role as both the initiator of policy

and the awakener of public opinion. It is true that only a strong, wise, and shrewd President can marshal to the support of wise policies the strength and wisdom latent in that slumbering giant—American public opinion. Yet while it is true that great men have rarely been elected President of the United States, it is upon that greatness, which is the greatness of its people personified, that the United States, from Washington to Franklin D. Roosevelt, has had to rely in the conduct of its foreign affairs. It is upon that greatness that Western Civilization must rely for its survival.

These words I addressed in 1949 to Mr. Truman and in 1956 to Mr. Eisenhower. It is the measure of the chronic weakness of Presidential leadership that the same words must be addressed to Mr. Kennedy

in 1962, at the beginning of his second year in office.

HANS J. MORGENTHAU'S column—devoted to discussing a wide variety of subjects bearing on problems of foreign and domestic politics—has been appearing bi-monthly in COMMENTARY since July of last year. His previous columns have dealt with the *Lao-tion crisis* (July), the *changed meaning of death and heroism in the nuclear age* (September), and *Berlin* (November). Mr. Morgenthau has been a consultant to the State Department, a professor at several universities, and is now director of the Center for the Study of American Foreign and Military Policy at the University of Chicago. Among his many books are *In Defense of the National Interest*, *The H-Bomb*, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, and most recently, *The Purpose of American Politics*.

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OBSERVATIONS

TWO VIEWS OF "JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG"

Harris Dienstfrey Jason Epstein



SAMUEL AND AGAG

Martin Buber

"JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG"

Judgment at Nuremberg, a three-hour film produced and directed by Stanley Kramer and written by Abby Mann, opened last month and has already provoked more heated discussion than any American movie within memory. Since the film makes a very ambitious attempt to deal with questions that are of particular interest to readers of COMMENTARY, we thought it appropriate to take the unusual step of presenting two differing responses.

HARRIS DIENSTFREY, an associate editor of COMMENTARY, writes frequently on the movies; his last contribution to these pages was an article on Ingmar Bergman (November 1961). JASON EPSTEIN, who participated in our symposium "Jewishness and the Younger Intellectuals" last April, is a vice-president of Random House and editor-in-chief of the Modern Library.

HARRIS DIENSTFREY: The message picture stands somewhere between the art film and the commercial movie. While the art film emphasizes texture and offers ultimates, and the commercial movie emphasizes plot and offers entertainment, the message picture chooses to emphasize a single problem, and it offers for exposure one tension-filled area of contemporary society. Most movies escape any such easy classification, of course. The neo-realistic films from Italy—such as Vittorio de Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* and *Umberto D*—often aim for ultimate values as well as contemporary problems (as a result, they sometimes confuse social conditions

with the condition of man); and many French comedies—such as Jean Renoir's *Can-Can* and *Picnic on the Grass*—present a surface of "simple" entertainment but are eminently serious beneath. As for American films, they usually make few bones about the entertainment they mean to offer, but it is also true that the best of them—those, for example, which Manny Farber calls "underground films"—contain an extraordinary amount of accurately observed contemporary life, sometimes much more than the presumably realer message pictures. In any case, attempts to make the latter have been few and far between in the United States. As a bit of Hollywood folklore goes: "If you want a message, send for Western Union."

To this, a major exception in Hollywood has been Stanley Kramer, an independent picture maker who now both directs and produces his own movies. He has probed such themes as race relations (*The Defiant Ones*), free speech (*Inherit the Wind*), and nuclear warfare (*On the Beach*.) Cinematically, Kramer has never been a particularly striking, interesting, or even adroit director. For better or worse the success of his films has depended on the intelligence with which they developed their themes.

The results vary. In *The Defiant Ones*, where Kramer was aided considerably by Sidney Poitier and Tony Curtis—as two convicts, Southern Negro and poor white, thrown together during a prison break—he made one of the few movies that suggests how America looks from its social and

economic basements and how a man's spirit might be damaged by the sight. But in *Inherit the Wind*, where he retold the Scopes "monkey" trial, Kramer crudely reduced all of its complexities to the lone issue of free speech. The reactions of a small rural community to the usurpation by science of provinces which the town had always assumed were God's, became, in Kramer's hands, the manifestations of undemocratic thought-control (if not something worse). The film further undercut its possible meaningfulness by portraying the man who represented Bryant as a rube and a humorless slob—no other word will do—and the man who represented Darrow as an urbane wit and meticulous eater who never belched.

The theme of Kramer's newest movie dwarfs any he has attempted so far. Ambitious, three hours long, *Judgment at Nuremberg* depicts a more or less fictional trial in 1948 of four German judges who had sentenced large numbers of men during the Nazi regime to concentration camps. Its theme is the moral responsibility of individuals who act with public sanction in public capacities. Given these obviously high intentions and the film's conceivable achievement, one can only be particularly disappointed at the failure of *Judgment at Nuremberg*; for it is a bad movie in almost every respect.

DETAILS OF the plot are fairly complex. The men on trial range from one who remains a thoroughly committed Nazi—"Today you judge me, tomorrow the Bolsheviks judge you!"—to a man, called Ernst Janning (Burt Lancaster), who helped establish the Weimar Republic, was considered one of the legal world's great jurists and thinkers, but who nevertheless headed the Nazi Ministry of Justice. The trial quickly centers on resolving the question of Janning's guilt. Though he refuses at first to enter a plea—his three compatriots plead not-guilty—his young attorney (Maximilian Schell) passionately believes that Janning must be saved so as to help lead the new Germany. The jurist's perplexing history pushes the American judge (Spencer Tracy) to go beyond his usual task of weighing the evidence; he also hopes to understand the reasons for Janning's behavior.

Toward the end of the trial, the Russians blockade Berlin, and by so doing make clear to the West the important part Germany will have to play in defending Europe. As a result, both the U.S. army prosecutor (Richard Widmark) and the American judge are told to "go easy." A nation seeing its former judges given harsh prison terms might not be eager to assist the political bloc which passed the sentences. Because of this extra-legal pressure, the trial of the four Nazi judges becomes a sort of parallel to the trials they themselves conducted. Beginning as an examination of individual responsibility, the present trial ultimately becomes a test of such responsibility. Yet, pressure or no, the American judge finds the four guilty. Despite the compassion evoked by Janning's terribly misguided motives, his actions were no different from those of his colleagues, and his guilt is no different either. The sentence for all is life imprisonment.

It is probably clear—even from this skeletal plot summary—that the several merits *Judgment at Nuremberg* does have are not always small. The film has an immediacy, for example, that is not simply the result of the current Berlin crisis or of ordinary "courtroom suspense"—although indeed, the screenplay (by Abby Mann) has moments of power, the photography (by Ernest Laszlo) sometimes establishes a documentary newsreel effect, and several of the performances (notably Maximilian Schell's and Montgomery Clift's, as a man sterilized by the Nazis) amount to acting of sustained complexity and intelligence. Mainly, though, the immediacy of *Judgment at Nuremberg* derives from the film's multiple purpose, a major part of which is the attempt to examine boldly the horror of the Nazi concentration camps—film clips screened during the trial show lamps made of human skin and emaciated bodies being piled into wide, deep ditches after the liberation. The film also seeks to understand the internal public support given the government that built and maintained these camps, and to assign guilt for the monstrous evil they represented (the defense attorney asks: but did not Churchill praise Hitler "in 1938?"). More, the movie wants to confront, via the blockade, the dilemmas of international politics, and to portray, through the attitudes of Janning (the "old" Germany) and his attorney (the

"new" one), thirty years of a nation's history.

Judgment at Nuremberg even attempts, rather anxiously, to provide object lessons for American political and institutional life. When one witness explains that the Nazis hanged children, the camera suddenly cuts to an American soldier standing on guard, a Negro. And when witnesses discuss the subservience of the German courts to politics and the transformation of trials into public circuses, the dialogue contains tones that clearly hint at McCarthyism, witch-hunts, and American Congressional investigating committees. Finally, when the defense attorney questions the U.S.'s right to condemn the German judges, he does so in part by raising the specter of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

There is a kind of bravery in urging these connections and in the film's whole intent to come to grips with "real" and "political" events. Perhaps it is most brave in its determination to take an absolutely clear stand concerning the guilt of the men on trial. Certainly the film's strongest virtue is its insistence on leaving no doubt about its judgment—on facing not simply the logic of its dramatic form but the ultimate demand of its subject matter.

AND YET *Judgment at Nuremberg* is confused, poorly made, and, worse, even disingenuous. The central problem it chooses to raise is a moral-philosophical one: the conflict between an individual's responsibility and his public duties, between commitment to the principles of justice and commitment to the cause of national survival. But the picture almost immediately devolves upon establishing a considerably narrower issue: the trial of the German judges is conducted to prove that they passed sentences regardless of the evidence put before them. Thus, they violated a law, according to the film, which is basic to every civilized nation in the world. But the determination of so specifically judicial an abuse has only the vaguest connection with the larger problem of individual responsibility in conflict with public needs. What relevance has this problem in relation to four men who have committed easily identifiable, commonly accepted criminal acts? More, the nature of the crime for which the film finds them guilty says nothing at all

about either the causes or the development or the consequences of the Nazi period. There is a wide distance between a corrupt judiciary and the concentration camps. Yet at its end the film acts as if it has satisfactorily fixed *all* its giant questions, not only the moral but the social and historical questions as well.

Judgment at Nuremberg tries to make many of its points through implicit parallels. But the situations it compares are usually so dissimilar that the ostensible parallel only creates additional irresolutions. The movie never recognizes the difference between the pressure under which the German judges passed sentences and the pressure under which the American judge must pass sentence at Nuremberg: the former were asked to condemn innocent men; the latter is asked to free guilty ones. Nor does the film suggest the quite different consequences in these two cases of standing against the ruling powers.

Most of the other parallels are simply ambiguous: the implied references to McCarthyism, the single abrupt image of an impassive Negro soldier, and so forth. Are such references meant to juxtapose comparable outrages (legally comparable or morally or both?), or are they meant to denote two stages, the incipient and the full-blown, in the evolution of an evil? If the film knows, or understands that its juxtapositions are at all unclear, it does not say.

One scene in particular reveals how *Judgment at Nuremberg* refuses to admit the possibility of having raised an unsolved and perhaps insoluble question. The background is this: Before the war, an orphaned sixteen-year-old German girl had been looked after by a long-time friend of her family, a sixty-year-old Jewish man. On the basis of a law which made intercourse between an "Aryan" and a "non-Aryan" illegal, the man was brought to trial and, despite the girl's (and his) total denial, was found guilty. Two of the Nazi judges on trial at Nuremberg had sentenced him, and the army prosecutor has sought out the now grown woman (Judy Garland) to insist that she testify against them.

From the opening of this scene—the very way in which the woman stands hidden in the shadows, in tragic profile, allowing her

husband to do much of the arguing at first—one knows the result, that she will come into the “light” to testify. The woman herself explains that testifying will mean the renewed hatred of her neighbors, the destruction of the store she and her husband have just bought, and a public agony she has lain awake every night fearing. But the prosecutor tells her—and the film clearly agrees—that testifying is her duty, “to one person at least.” Her opposition collapses immediately. The possibility that the woman might have an equally high duty to herself and to her marriage is, in this one phrase, completely dismissed. At best, the prosecutor’s pronouncement is an individual assessment among equally valid moral claims; like all such assessments, it can never be certain. But the film treats the pronouncement as if it were revealed law, beyond dispute. (The question of whether or not the woman’s testimony is necessary for the conviction of the four judges is silently by-passed.) The self-satisfied, almost pompous tone of this particular scene and its lack of moral tension, is characteristic of the way the film confronts the most difficult moral problems and pretends to meet them head on.

As might be supposed from all this, *Judgment at Nuremberg* also uses a stock heavy-handedness to establish its characters. In the opening five minutes, the American judge, who is, after all, the moral agent of the film, (1) remarks that the house procured for him by the army is much too large for a single man such as himself, (2) complains that for the same reason he does not need two servants, (3) tells an army aide to relax and not call him “sir”—“Call me Judge or Dan or something,” (4) explains that he understands full well that he is the tenth or so judge considered for the job, and (5) tries to prevent his maid from carrying upstairs one of his suitcases—apparently the heaviest of the three he has brought. The sequence leaves one with no doubts about the judge: he is an American, a democrat, and a good man. (He comes from Maine too.)

Many of the secondary characters are presented, no less obviously, mainly by their physical appearance. The three German judges who quickly get relegated to second place at the trial say very little in the course of the film. But if they said nothing,

one would still know them to be guilty; they carry the mark of Cain on their faces—unlike a man like Adolf Eichmann. The fanatic Nazi watches the proceedings with a continuous sneer, his full lower lip drooping slightly—so full that it immediately signifies decadence. A second judge, a bungling opportunist, sports jowls that one understands are as limp and as flabby as his soul. Who would not convict these men? They are, respectively, the archetypal Sadist and Coward fashioned by Hollywood over a span of forty years. (Lancaster and Clift do manage to use their appearance to good advantage: the former’s large, big-boned head sits heavily and ill at ease on a somehow shrunken body, and Clift’s face, as if designed by an artist verging on cubism, is both a sign and a cross.)

JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG manipulates various technical devices to help put on its false front. There is the business of moving from one scene to the next by repeating a word or action. Repetitions usually imply that an attitude or a prophecy—that something—is being confirmed or ironically undercut; they suggest a connection and a density of thought. But the connections here are meaningless. When Janning decides to confess his guilt, he tells his attorney: “Nothing you can say will change my mind. Nothing.” The next scene, cut directly, as it were, into this remark, starts with a news commentator saying: “*Nothing* has changed yet in the Berlin situation. . . .” Again, in another scene, the American judge and the embittered wife (Marlene Dietrich) of a German general, who had been executed by a previous American court, drink coffee together while discussing the puzzles and complexities of Hitler’s Germany. The wife says that the judge must believe that she and her husband knew nothing about the concentration camps, the judge in turn explains that he does not know what to believe, and the camera closes in on coffee being poured into his demitasse. There is an abrupt cut to a shot of coffee being poured into a paper cup. The camera pulls back, and it is the next morning in the office of the prosecutor. It is clear that neither of these repetitions carries any significance at all, but function only to create a false resonance.

The existence of several minor characters produces the same kind of "resonance." A German chauffeur, the prosecutor's assistant, a German prostitute—to mention only three—immediately trigger by their presence as well as by their appearance very familiar expectations: perhaps a violent anti-American speech from the chauffeur, or an explanation from the assistant about his boss's obsessive concern with punishing the Nazis, or a cynical speech from the prostitute to the effect that American and German soldiers are equally swinish. But the characters fail even to fulfill these clichés. In fact they do nothing at all in the film but contribute their physical presence. These people inflate the movie with dramatic foreshadowing and then, before one recognizes that they have been misleading gestures rather than true accomplishments, they are swallowed by the plot—like the deceptive transitions.

Much too much in *Judgment at Nuremberg* of every sort of thing is only gesture. The film has attempted a good deal that is foreign to many American films; its complex intentions and its degree of courage together create a compelling surface. But these virtues do not go very deep. Almost everywhere beneath the surface, *Judgment at Nuremberg* gives way to falsifying techniques, comforting characterizations, and to moral and intellectual disorder.

II

JASON EPSTEIN: *Judgment at Nuremberg* is an astonishingly intelligent film which succeeds in raising, despite the occasional fumbling of its director, Stanley Kramer, some of the darkest questions of this dark age. For while the production is mounted on such a pretentious scale as occasionally to blur the point the film is trying to make, it is clear from reading the script that Abby Mann, who wrote it, is strenuously addressing himself to the idea that not Germany itself but our civilization as a whole was represented by the Nazi episode, and that the cold war is a further, more virulent, symptom of the same disorder. Now this is a provocative point, not often made by even our most astute and responsible observers, and it is all the more

remarkable, even to some extent bizarre, that it should come to us in the oversimplified images of a pompously directed moving picture, that Spencer Tracy and Judy Garland—those Virgils of our childhood—should rise again to show us the way.

The film takes place as the trials are petering out. Goering is dead, the generals have been sentenced. The world has lost interest. It is the time of the Berlin Airlift, and the cold war has begun. The Americans who are running the trials are beginning to wonder whether it wouldn't be a good idea to forget about the Nazis in view of the more important business at hand.

The particular trial with which *Judgment at Nuremberg* deals is one of the so-called second series, involving lawyers, industrialists, financiers, diplomats, and businessmen of the Third Reich, and the American judge (Spencer Tracy) who has come all the way from Maine to hear the case is genuinely curious to know what this second level of Nazidom was like and how the four lawyers in the dock could possibly have served under Hitler. In the preface to the published version of the screenplay, Mann writes that he chose this series of trials because they seemed to him the "most significant." "The Goerings, the Streichers, the Himmlers, the Eichmanns," he says, "would inevitably end in a study in Psychopathic Sexualis. But the second group—these men who had been the bulwark of the most enlightened culture of Europe—how could they have gone along? And if they had, what was their responsibility? Finally a glimmering of understanding that the very philosophy that enabled the Nazis to come to power was not unrelated to the motive in their being released set the groundwork for my premise."

As the film ends, the following notice appears upon the screen: "On 14 July, 1949 judgment was rendered in the last of the second Nuremberg trials. Of ninety-nine sentenced to prison terms, not one is still serving his sentence." This "bulwark of the most enlightened culture of Europe," then, is once again at large and, we are free to assume, up to its old tricks—this time arm in arm with ourselves. The point that Mann is making here is not so much that the men convicted at Nuremberg were Nazis who should have been severely punished and instead succeeded in getting off lightly, but

that they represent a continuous and apparently indispensable filament in the modern world—these Germans who made it possible for Hitler to fight his war and who, we feel, are necessary to help us fight ours.

OF THE FOUR NAZI JUDGES on trial three are typical of the sort of flotsam that rises to the surface everywhere, time-servers and opportunists who, though they are played by German character actors and are meant to be specifically German types, are really universal specimens. The courtrooms of the world, one is made to feel, are full of such shifty characters. The fourth, Ernst Janning (played by Burt Lancaster), is also a common type, but of a superior order. Earlier in his career he had helped draft the Weimar constitution and stood for the highest ideals of German civility. Having committed himself to humanitarian and patriotic causes before Hitler, he agreed to serve under the dictator as a sort of Minister of Justice, for the sake of his country and hopefully to restrain the Nazis should they get out of hand. Like the lesser defendants, however, he ended by railroading numbers of innocent victims, two of whom appear at the trial to testify against him.

The trial, we are told, lasts eight months (the film lasts three hours), and we are, of course, given only brief glimpses of it—the American prosecutor establishing that the defendants had been running kangaroo courts and the German lawyer for the defense insisting that they were only doing their duty and that their victims were guilty in any case. But for all the debating points that are exchanged, there is little doubt from the very beginning as to how the trial will come out, and it requires an effort to go along with the pretense that Spencer Tracy, despite his anguished wrinkles, is really keeping an open mind. Indeed, the legal business is so lightly sketched in that we are never quite sure what exactly the defendants are being charged with. In short, it is obvious that Mann is not chiefly interested in this aspect of the trial at all. As a reading of the script makes clear, there is something else on his mind that Kramer seems not to have projected as clearly as he might but which is meant to be the main source of the film's suspense—not whether the Germans will turn out to have been

guilty, but whether the Americans will submit to the increasing pressures to drop the charges ("the very philosophy that enabled the Nazis to come to power was not unrelated to the motive in their being released").

Now Mann puts this premise, as he should, in the most tentative and qualified terms; and it would therefore be an injustice to give the impression that he is trying to draw anything like a simple parallel between the Nazis on the one hand and the German-American alliance in the cold war on the other. In fact he is not suggesting a parallel at all, but a continuum. That is, he sees the history of the past thirty years as a single unit held together by the presence of a tendency in the modern world toward mass violence, particularly when national interests are threatened. Perhaps he means to suggest even that these national interests are hardly more than pretexts to justify the violence that we in our civilization can no longer suppress.

FROM THE VERY START OF THE FILM, there are pressures on Spencer Tracy to take a moderate view of the defendants. One of his fellow judges, who had served in the first series of trials and has acquired a practical attitude toward the proceedings, sees no reason to deal harshly with these relatively solid citizens. His adjutant, who has a German girl friend, is eager to get along in Germany. Marlene Dietrich, who nearly manages to seduce him, thinks it would be brutal to blame these defendants for what the Nazis did. But the climactic pressure is the Berlin Airlift which occurs toward the end of the trials and which persuades the American prosecutor himself, who up to now had pressed his case with the cold passion of Perry Mason, to ask that the charges be mitigated (a point which is made with unmistakable clarity in the screenplay, but which Kramer thoroughly obscures in the film). Yet the judge does not yield, either to Marlene Dietrich's blandishments or to the requirements of the cold war.

What mainly convinces him to hold his ground is a prosecutor's argument of such dubious legal relevance that its presence in the film can only be accounted for by Mann's essential indifference to legal questions and his primary concern with the other, deeper

questions alluded to above. Halfway through the film, long before he decides to relent, the prosecutor asks to be sworn in as a witness and proceeds to darken the courtroom so that he can show films taken in the death camps on the day they were liberated. These films are shocking. They are so shocking, indeed, so absolutely overpowering in their gigantic obscenity, that it doesn't occur to one until long afterward that the defense should have objected to them (throughout the film the defense objects to almost everything the prosecution says), that the judges themselves should have stopped this demonstration, that even the censors in Hollywood should have intervened. One is likely never to have seen such films before, yet having seen them there is no forgetting—ever, for they illuminate, as nothing else quite can, the central fact of modern history: that no class of people—neither women nor children nor friends nor poets—can withstand the combined fury of the cataclysmic political and technological machinery that has emerged from the very depths of our civilization. These mountains of bodies, recognizable faces, sexual organs, beaten children—mountains of them indiscriminately pushed, arms and legs swaying and wagging, by the bulldozer into a pit: what are they meant to remind us of? Not that the four defendants in the film were guilty of certain juridical abuses (we know that they had nothing directly to do with the death camps); not even that only twenty years ago the “most enlightened culture of Europe”—our present allies—had allowed this to happen in its very midst; but that this is how death looks. This is how it looked at Hiroshima (as we are reminded by the defense attorney who argues at one point that the Germans are not the only mass murderers in the world), and this is how it may very well look tomorrow or a year from now unless the “philosophy that enabled the Nazis to come to power [and which] was not unrelated to the motive in their being released” is somehow inhibited.

On the following day, the defense rises to speak and, strangely, still does not question the legal propriety of these films in a trial which technically has nothing to do with the death camps. Instead a few days later he addresses himself to the general question of German guilt in a speech which still has

nothing to do with the trial, and even less with the defense of his clients. In this speech he proceeds to implicate the whole world. “Why did [the Nazis] succeed?” he asks.

What about the rest of the world, Your Honors? Did they not know the intentions of the Third Reich? Did they not hear the words Hitler broadcast all over the world? Did they not read his intentions in *Mein Kampf*, published in every corner of the world? Where is the responsibility of the Soviet Union who in 1939 signed a pact with Hitler and enabled him to make war? Are we not to find Russia guilty? Where is the responsibility of the Vatican who signed the Concordat Pact in 1933 with Hitler giving him his first tremendous prestige? Are we now to find the Vatican guilty? Where is the responsibility of the world leader, Winston Churchill, who said in an open letter to the *London Times* in 1938—1938 Your Honors!—“Were England to suffer a national disaster, I should pray to God to send a man of the strength of mind and will of an Adolf Hitler.” Are we now to find Winston Churchill guilty? Where is the responsibility of those American industrialists who helped Hitler to rebuild his arms and profited by that rebuilding? Are we not to find the American industrialists guilty? No. Your Honors, Germany alone is not guilty. The whole world is as responsible for Hitler as Germany. It is an easy thing to condemn one man in the dock. It is easy to condemn the German people—to speak of the basic flaw in the German character that allowed Hitler to rise to power—and at the same time comfortably ignore the basic flaw of character that made the Russians sign pacts with him, Winston Churchill praise him, American industrialists profit by him.

This speech is delivered with great vehemence by Maximilian Schell, a German actor who obviously needed little coaching. He plays his part with such intuitively passionate conviction that he alone goes far toward explaining the basis for West German recovery. But his speech for all its force has nothing to do with the defendants and the charges against them. It is instead a part of Abby Mann's polemic—a set piece intended to tell the audience what the film is really about. Its effect on Judge Haywood (Spencer Tracy) is only to intensify his

wrinkles. We all know what his verdict will be and that none of the entreaties of his fellow Americans—not even the recommendation of the prosecutor—will sway him. In delivering his verdict, he echoes the remarks in Mann's preface:

If . . . the defendants were all degraded perverts—if all the leaders of the Third Reich were sadistic monsters and maniacs—these events would have no more moral significance than an earthquake or other natural catastrophes. But this trial has shown that under the stress of a national crisis, ordinary men, even able and extraordinary men, can delude themselves into committing crimes so vast and heinous that they beggar the imagination. . . .

It seems to me that we are being asked at this point to think of ourselves at the end of World War III in a position similar to that of the defendants—ourselves, ordinary men, perhaps even extraordinary men, who under the stress of a national crisis are acquiescing in crimes beside which Hitler's will seem small. In case the audience might miss the point, the most reprehensible of the four defendants (an unrepentant Nazi) rises as the judge completes the reading of his verdict and shouts, "Today you sentence us. Tomorrow the Bolsheviks will sentence you." Which is precisely what the Americans, who had wanted to call the trials off earlier in the film, had been saying.

I must not give the impression that Abby Mann has written a pacifist film in the usual sense. He is not asking us to give up the bomb: simply to look at politics and death. Despite Stanley Kramer's bulging close-ups and vast floating images, *Judgment at Nuremberg* is nothing like *On the Beach*. Nor is Mann suggesting that Americans today have the same relatively simple choices open to them that Germans had in the 30's. As the film ends and we last see Spencer Tracy, he is walking through the long, grated corridor of the prison in which the trials had been held. His back is to the camera. His shoulders are hunched, and one feels he might be weeping. Certainly he is crushed by what he has seen. But we are not to assume from this that as soon as he gets back to Maine he is going to set up a branch of the Committee for Nuclear Disarmament. Rather one feels that for him, as for us, there is perhaps no

place to go, nor is there anything in our dreadful situation so concrete that it can effectively be resisted. But we are also left with the idea that where there is life there is choice, and where there is choice there is also the possibility that we too may one day be called to account for decisions we failed to make, for opportunities that we may have overlooked, for alternatives we were too blind to know were there.



SAMUEL AND AGAG

Martin Buber

The following piece (translated from the German by Maurice Friedman) will be included among the autobiographical fragments in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, edited by Dr. Friedman and Paul Arthur Schilpp and scheduled for publication in 1963 by the Open Court Publishing Company as part of the Library of Living Philosophers.

I ONCE MET on a journey a man whom I already knew from an earlier encounter. He was an observant Jew who followed the religious tradition in all the details of his life-pattern. But what seemed to me essential (and had become unmistakably clear to me at our first meeting) was that this relationship to tradition had its origin and its constantly renewed confirmation in the relationship of the man to God.

Now when I saw him again, we happened to fall into a discussion of Biblical questions: not indeed of peripheral questions but central ones, central questions of faith. I now no longer remember exactly in what connection we came to speak of that section of the Book of Samuel in which it is told how Samuel delivered to King Saul the message that his dynastic rule would be taken from him because he had spared the life of the conquered prince of the Amalekites. I reported to my partner in dialogue how dreadful it had been to me, even as a boy, to read this as the message of God (though my heart had compelled me to read it again, and certainly to think about the fact that it stood written in the Bible). I told my companion how even in my boy-

hood it had horrified me to read or to recall how the heathen king went up to the prophet with the words on his lips, "Surely the bitterness of death is past," and was hewn to pieces by him. I said to my partner in dialogue: "I have never been able to believe that this is a message of God. I do not believe it."

With wrinkled and contracted brow, the man sat opposite me and his glance flamed into my eyes. He remained silent, began to speak, became silent again. "So?" he broke forth at last. "So? You do not believe it?" "No," I answered, "I do not believe it." "So? So? You do not believe it?" he repeated almost threateningly. And I once again: "No." "What . . . what"—he thrust the words before him one after the other—"what do you believe then?" "I believe," I replied without reflecting, "that Samuel had misunderstood God." And he, again slowly, but more softly than before: "So? You believe that?" And I: "Yes." Then we were both silent. But now something happened the like of which I have rarely seen before or after in my whole life long. The angry countenance opposite me became transformed, as if a soothing hand had passed over it. It lightened and cleared, and was now turned toward me bright and clear. "Well," said the man with a positively gentle tender clarity, "I think so too." And again we became silent, for a long time.

There is, after all, nothing astonishing in the fact that this kind of observant Jew, when he has to choose between God and the Bible, chooses God: the God in Whom he believes, Him in Whom he can believe. And yet: it seemed to me at that time significant, and still seems so now. The man later came to the Land of Israel and here I met him once again, some time before his death. Naturally I regarded him then as the speaker of that word of the time before; but now the problem of Biblical belief was not touched on. It was indeed no longer necessary.

I, however, since that early conversation long ago, have repeatedly faced the ques-

tion whether I then expressed precisely my true meaning. And again and again I answered: yes, and no. Yes, insofar as what was spoken of in that conversation was concerned; for there it was right to answer my partner in dialogue in his language and within the limits of his language, so that the dialogue should not come to nought and the common insight into one truth at times afforded to two men might fulfill itself, in no matter how limited a way. Insofar as that was concerned—yes. But no, when it is a question both of recognizing, oneself, and then pointing out to others, that man and the human race are inclined to misunderstand God. Man is so created that he can understand, but does not have to understand, what God says to him. God does not abandon the created man to his needs and anxieties; He provides him with His word. But man does not listen with faithful ears to what is spoken to him. In the very hearing he already confuses the command of heaven and the statute of earth, revelation to the created being with the orientations that he has himself established. Even man's holy scriptures are not immune, not even the Bible.

What is involved here is, ultimately, not the fact that this or that form of Biblical historical narrative has misunderstood God; what is involved is the fact that in the work of throats and pens out of which the text of the "Old Testament" has arisen, misunderstanding has again and again attached itself to understanding, the manufactured been mixed with the received. We have no objective criterion for distinguishing between the two; we have only faith—when we have it. Nothing can make me believe in a God who punishes Saul because he did not murder his enemy. And yet even today I still cannot read the passage that tells this otherwise than with fear and trembling. But not it alone. Always when I have to translate or to interpret a Biblical text, I do so with fear and trembling, in an inescapable tension between the word of God and the word of man.

SOVIET JEWS: AMERICAN ORTHODOXY

MILTON HIMMELFARB

De-Stalinization or Re-Stalinization?

When Khrushchev expelled Stalin from his tomb, after the last congress of the Soviet Communist party, most of us were amused. I was too, until a friend suggested to me that Khrushchev was de-Stalinizing in a rather Stalinist way. The old joke was that Stalin once warned Krupskaya that she had better watch out or he would replace her as Lenin's widow. It is no joke that normally Stalin would first destroy someone before adopting his line—for instance, Trotsky, before the industrialization *à outrance* of Stalin's five-year plans. The attack on Stalin in 1961, therefore, could mean re-Stalinization rather than de-Stalinization. But probably my friend is wrong, and probably the Stalinist era, with its insane blood-thirst and terror, is over.

Still, the sentencing of members of synagogue boards for alleged espionage and the removal of others—not to mention the many synagogues closed in the past year or so—are uncomfortably reminiscent of Stalinism. In a country where legally the Jews are supposed to be first and foremost a secular nationality, the only place where they can meet together, take comfort from each other, and strengthen and encourage each other, is the synagogue. There is, of course, the new Yiddish bi-monthly journal, but it is primarily an article for export, designed to persuade Jews abroad that the Soviet government is not really anti-Jewish. In any case, a journal is read in privacy and cannot give the intimate, physical sense of community that coming together in one place gives. Though normally only the old and old-fashioned still go to the synagogues, on certain holidays large crowds of younger, obviously untraditional Jews gather in and

around them, sometimes quietly and sometimes festively, each warming himself by the others' presence and all tacitly demonstrating against their fate. And as if that were not odious enough, the synagogue is where foreign Jews go. Israelis, Americans, Frenchmen, who for years may not have seen the inside of a synagogue at home, find their way in Russia to the place where they can meet Jews and, if not talk freely with them, at least give them an implicit assurance that they are remembered.

For the Soviet authorities all this is not only an annoyance, it is subversion, even treason. Clearly, they are determined to make the synagogue revert to what it was in the last years of Stalin's life—*di shvartse yorn*, the Black Years, as the Jews call them. At most, the synagogue is to be for a human dust waiting to be buried. Preferably, it is to disappear altogether.

In Soviet law each Jewish congregation is an isolated body, administered by a committee of twenty—*dvadtsat'ka* in Russian—whose names are registered with the authorities. No *dvadtsat'ka*, no synagogue. (Judaism is the only religion in Russia, besides a few millenarian sects, that is kept so atomized. In varying degrees, every other religion is allowed some measure of central organization and of communication.) In the best of times a man must be courageous to serve on a *dvadtsat'ka*. Now who will be foolhardy enough to take the place of a man imprisoned or deposed? Of those who are already members, who will not be tempted to resign? The Soviet newspapers printed nothing about the synagogue trustees until the outcry abroad caused Tass to affirm that the three men arrested and sentenced in Leningrad were spies. (It was silent about

the others.) In the Soviet Union what is not printed is rumored. The arrests and convictions were sinister enough in themselves, but the initial decision not to report them made them doubly sinister.

In its statement Tass was able to include a quotation from a speech by Nahum Goldmann of the World Jewish Congress denying that the Soviet government is anti-Semitic. And indeed the government is not anti-Semitic. It only dislikes Jews, Judaism, and a Jewish community.

More or less simultaneously, the Soviet press was mounting a campaign against embezzlers—reporting arrests, naming names, and announcing several executions. The names tended to be Goldman, Ganzenfranz, Epelbaum, and others of the same kind. Was it a coincidence? Marxist-Leninists do not believe in coincidence; after “as is well known” they like “it is no accident.” Besides, there is the Stalinist precedent. In Stalin’s last years the names of people accused or convicted of embezzlement had a way of being Jewish, like the names of cosmopolitans, agents of imperialism, and bourgeois nationalists.

After what Khrushchev himself has revealed about Soviet justice, the guilt of the so-called embezzlers who were executed cannot be taken for granted. Anyway, surely execution is a bit severe. Where are the humanitarians, individually and in their organizations? They protested about Caryl Chessman. They are protesting about Adolf Eichmann. They have not protested about the Soviet embezzlers.

An Unknown Jewish Sect

The late Louis Ginzberg’s *unbekannte jüdische Sekte* is now generally thought to be the same as the community that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, two thousand years ago. In their own way, the Orthodox Jews of America are an unknown sect too.

The data on Judaism in the United States—the number of congregations, the number of synagogue members, etc.—are notoriously to be treated with reserve, and the data for the Orthodox with the greatest reserve. Their central organizations are multiple and weak, many of their congregations and rabbis having no affiliations at all. Their people are more diverse in class, occupation, education (general and Jewish), na-

tional origin, and distance from immigration than the people of Reform or Conservatism—more diverse, even, in belief and practice. “Non-observant Orthodox,” which is self-contradictory, has lost its power to surprise. German philosophers and Polish Hasidim are among their rabbis, and Arabic, German, and the varieties of Yiddish and of American English are among their languages.

Men and women brought up in Orthodoxy continue to join Conservative and Reform congregations, or none, and young men trained in Orthodox schools continue to become Conservative and Reform rabbis. At the same time, a new Orthodox influence is making itself felt in Jewish education and social work. Today in Jewish centers one can see something new—social workers with covered heads, all trained in professional schools and some also ordained as rabbis. In Jewish schools, even non-Orthodox schools, principals and teachers are often Orthodox, devout, and ordained. Such men enter social work and education for many reasons, not least a traditional Jewish reluctance to use a rabbinical qualification as a means of earning a living and a scarcity of congregations that are observant enough as well as a distaste for the activities and style of life expected of an American rabbi. Their very readiness to work at jobs that pay less and command less respect than the rabbinate, in posts and in institutions where they teach and guide the young, may help to restore commitment to Orthodoxy by American Jews, or at least respect for it. If I were an Orthodox master planner, I would not be sorry to see my boys in the Y’s and schools.

In general, the most acculturated of the American Orthodox rabbis are those who were ordained at Yeshiva University. It is they who make up the bulk of the Rabbinical Council of America, the Orthodox rabbinical association that sounds and looks most American. Typically, they serve “modern Orthodox” congregations—at least one member heads a Conservative congregation—and they preach in English. The Rabbinical Council publishes a quarterly, *Tradition*, now in its fourth year, which is the best of the three rabbinical journals in English, livelier than *Conservative Judaism* or the (Reform) Central Conference of American Rabbis’ *Journal*.

Tradition is about the only rabbinical journal in which you can find a really good discussion of church-state issues. With rare exceptions, what the others print on that subject is apt to be a restatement of the classical separationist position. *Tradition* is not editorially against separation, but neither is it for the kind of separation that most liberals, including liberal clergymen, are for. Its neutrality reflects the debate going on among the Orthodox, a debate long since settled everywhere else in the Jewish community in favor of a strict interpretation of separation. The latest issue has a piece on Sunday laws from which I learned things that I had not known before and which recommends a strategy for the Orthodox that seems to do justice to their distinctive values and requirements but that is likely to make other parts of the Jewish community unhappy. Some pages later there is a rejoinder to an argument in an earlier issue for federal aid to religious schools. (Between the two is an article on whether Judaism is an optimistic or pessimistic religion—a good, unusual question, handled well.)

A useful new feature is a report on religious (i.e., Orthodox) trends in Israel. We are apt to forget how important religion and the religious people are in Israel; I was startled to learn from someone who should know that nearly a quarter of all Israelis will not turn on their radios on the Sabbath. When one considers the place of radio in Israeli life, that is a high proportion, and if so many will not even turn on their radios, many more must think of themselves as being essentially religious in some more or less traditional way. One thing I learned from the magazine is that the older immigrants want their synagogues and their rites to be like *landsmanshaften*, recalling the old country and the good old days, but that the native-born, whether of Occidental or of Oriental stock, dislike community-of-origin synagogues and seem to be converging toward one rite and prayer book, of a generalized Hasidic character. The report is by a man who knows what is going on, is familiar with both the rabbinical and the *wissenschaftlich* scholarship, and does not hesitate to apply realistic sociological analysis where it fits.

Initially I felt about *Tradition* as Dr.

Johnson felt about women preaching—surprised that it was done at all. This sort of thing is new for the Orthodox in America. To be sure, there were Orthodox Jews here long before the immigrations from Central and Eastern Europe, and some of their descendants are still members of such synagogues as the Spanish and Portuguese, but, as Nathan Glazer has pointed out, theirs was a respectable rather than an intellectual or a fervid Orthodoxy. Orthodox rabbis with a good general education and a tolerable command of English are not new, but not until now have there been enough of them to keep a journal like *Tradition* going. Even the impulse to publish it is new. Do they feel more confident of themselves now? Are they better able to handle it? Can they count on more colleagues who will read it? Or is the existence of the journal less a reflection of trends than of a chance coming together of a few people? I suspect that it has something to do with a trend and that it says something, obscurely, about our times.

I also suspect that the editors and contributors are not so self-confident as they would like to think. After all, Orthodoxy may be making some gains in this country, but it is sustaining more losses. More importantly, the *Tradition* people must feel an intellectual and religious uneasiness. A regular feature in their journal is a review of current responsa. This rabbinical-legal literature, like the Talmud itself, is always interesting for people with good minds who have had the necessary training—interesting, but not necessarily felt to be relevant; just as for a modern agnostic, medieval scholasticism may be interesting without being relevant. But Orthodox rabbis have to feel that rabbinical law is relevant. In the latest issue one of the responsa deals with a recurrent question, whether a refrigerator may be opened on the Sabbath. (Opening the door admits warm air and therefore activates the motor. It is taken for granted that the refrigerator may not be opened if the light bulb has not been removed.) A combination of learning and subtlety could lead to a decision that a refrigerator may be used on the Sabbath, and the exercise of learning and ingenuity is always satisfying. But can men like those who edit and write for *Tradition* believe

unambiguously that such questions are serious?

It is precisely the Rabbinical Council, of all the American Orthodox groups, that most favors reviving the Sanhedrin. The Council's members will not say it, perhaps even to themselves, but they must feel oppressed by the ever more constrictive interpretations and attitudes that have been accumulating about rabbinical law for many centuries, and they long for a body with the authority and courage to lighten their burden.

"One of Our Own"

In the past few months the Jews of New York twice showed that they can easily resist the temptation to vote for a Jew. The first

time was the Democratic primary, when Arthur Levitt, running against Mayor Wagner, got few of their votes. The second time was the election itself, when the Republican Louis J. Lefkowitz was not supported by many Jewish voters either. Wagner had what Levitt and Lefkowitz did not have, the active approval of Senator Lehman and Mrs. Roosevelt.

If only because Jews tend to be ideological in their politics, they also tend to be relatively uninfluenced in a candidate's favor by his being "one of our own." (Upper-class Yankees in New England may vote more for "one of our own" than the Jews of New York do.) Of course, we do not yet know how Jews would vote in a presidential election with a Jewish candidate.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Western Values & Total War

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Reading "Western Values and Total War" [October 1961], I am astounded that, apart from one splendid paragraph of Mr. Morgenthau, there is no discussion of national sovereignty as the bottleneck preventing a solution to the dilemma, and in fact creating and aggravating the dilemma. Yet the nation-state as we have it is simply what Lewis Mumford would call a baroque hangover. In this respect there is no difference between President Kennedy (and our power elite) and Louis XIV. Every time we speak of "we" and "they"—or of "unilateral" and "multilateral" disarmament—we essentially accept and affirm this disastrous conception. We are talking about states, not people.

The symposiasts are discussing absolute danger—and therefore it would be worthwhile to consider such merely relative "losses" as renouncing sovereignty in various combinations and degrees. (There are several other possibilities besides the supra-state that Mr. Morgenthau mentions.) Yet these possibilities have never been thoroughly explored in public discussion. Naturally such proposals are literally subversive; they involve lowering the flag. Is this why they are avoided by prestigious scholars?

On the other hand, the entire history of Western culture has to do with the motion among tribal, city, imperial, feudal, and national organization, and the dialectic of state-power and freedom. One is not giving up Western values if one suggests that in present circumstances it would be wise to give up the United States of America.

PAUL GOODMAN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

With the exception of Irving Kristol, whose contribution [from the audience] to the discussion was very brief and was ignored by the others, the participants all operated with an assumption that I would call the rationalistic fallacy: they took it for granted that both sides in the East-West competition rationally pursue only such "healthy-

minded" motives as survival, power, prestige, revenue.

Professor Hook, whose thinking in this respect is similar to that of the others, has faith that the Communists want to survive. Why? They believe in history and not in immortality, hence survival is the *summum bonum*. That does seem rather logical and rational, but since when have the Communists—or anyone else, for that matter—been either?

The assumption that men pursue their self-interest does sometimes help us explain certain routine events—perhaps certain routine stock market transactions, though even here the irrational enters very significantly. But to be able to come to grips with such phenomena as war and totalitarianism, one must, in my opinion, assume that men desire not only survival but also self-destruction, not only life but also death. Without such an assumption, how can one explain the persistence and extraordinary popularity of war, in modern and ancient times?

WERNER COHN

University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations on the Snow-Hughes-Morgenthau-Hook symposium.

The magazine continues to be remarkably consistent in quality.

NAT HENTOFF

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Surely better alternative positions could have been found than those expressed in "Western Values." COMMENTARY owes its readers articles by Erich Fromm, Seymour Melman, Charles Osgood, yes, even Bertrand Russell and Martin Buber. . . .

Your round-table is too skillfully arranged and has the cards stacked against proponents of human survival.

RUBIN FALK

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When I see a good play, I stay in my seat and applaud until my hands get tired and the curtain has dropped. I wish with this

letter to effect the same response to "Western Values and Total War."

RICHARD BADLAIN

Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Having demonstrated the demise of the art of conversation in your lead article, you nevertheless left some questions unasked. For Professor Hook: Regardless of what they *say*, how many men would *really* rather be dead than, say, be a citizen of Moscow?

When the rude form of certain death waits without, most men (with or without Ph.D.'s) will rather be *anything* than dead.

JOHN WEISS

Detroit, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

So many interesting, important, intelligent things are said by various speakers in "Western Values and Total War" that one is at first baffled by the fact that the experience of reading the record is so unrewarding. To be hostile to the idea of a debate may seem rather subversive, but there remains the question whether certain kinds of debate *can* be fruitful. One kind that cannot, it seems to me, is a debate in which the speakers are really accusers. In the present discussion one side accuses the other of capitulating to the Soviet aggressors, while the other accuses the one of helping to bring about a nuclear war!! Either accusation is of such colossal proportions that the points actually "debated," otherwise important enough, shrivel to insignificance. . . . In a situation like this, the "gossip" heard after the meeting is more honest than anything said from the platform. This gossip is to the effect that Speaker A is stupid, or that Speaker B is suffering from an obsession—precisely the things the people on stage were thinking but were too polite to say; for it is permissible to suppose that one's colleagues are appeasers or warmongers, even at times when appeasement or war would mean general catastrophe, but it is not permissible to be impolite. . . .

I would propose removing from the platform the men who suspect their opponents of stupidity or morbidity. Then one could perhaps discuss the proposition that any form of unilateral disarmament would mean surrender to Soviet imperialism and the equally problematic proposition that if you want peace you should prepare for war.

As far as accusation goes, the one legitimate accusation would be against COMMENTARY itself which issued the invitations and

failed to include a pacifist. I am not a pacifist myself, but that does not stop me from recognizing that pacifism is the only attitude that now has any considerable dynamic among the younger intelligentsia. . . . A great deal of the "debate," though not stupid, was "Old Codger" talk: the same sentiments, less well-expressed, can be heard through the keyhole of any faculty club or senior common room.

ERIC BENTLEY

Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

This is to congratulate you on your stimulating and thought-provoking discussion.

It is a pity, however, that Mr. Hughes's recommendation of Swiss-type militia forces for the European NATO nations, which he amplified by his reference to George Kennan's proposal, was not elaborated upon by other participants. At least, some of them came very close to raising the same demand. Mr. Hook remarked that "we must never lose sight of the ethical issue" and that "if we are prepared to fight, then we may not have to fight," which reminded me of Leonard Frank's challenging paradox that "not the murderer, but the murdered is guilty."

I also refer to Mr. Morgenthau's criticism of "our inability to devise a third alternative" to surrender or nuclear war, and Snow's remark that "the only reason why the West relied on the deterrent was the implied disbelief in the willingness of Western men to bear arms"—a disbelief justified only as long as our political leaders and defense planners cannot think of anything but professional and semi-professional armies, and continue to disregard the possibilities which lie in the creation of Swiss-type forces for territorial defense and as reserves.

Sir Charles Snow was the only one to express approval of George Kennan's recommendation of the Swiss system. If Mr. Hook opposed this idea because "it is highly romantic to imagine that a militia alone could prevent a country from being occupied," he should have been reminded that, as I have always emphasized, most countries can and will back up their Swiss-type forces by regular, heavily-armed, and mobile divisions.

It therefore would seem that in spite of the wide divergency of the starting points of your participants, agreement could have been reached on at least one very positive program: the creation of strong Swiss-type reserve forces by the European NATO na-

tions, which has the following tremendous advantages:

1. It can be enacted unilaterally by the West, without being delayed by negotiations with the Kremlin.

2. In view of its patently defensive nature, it is unlikely to meet objections on the part of the Kremlin. In fact, it is apt to calm down any fears which Communist nations may have in view of the lopsided structure of Western defenses.

3. It is by far the most economical and most popular military system.

4. Combined with existing regular forces and their heavy weapons and equipment, such forces, by their immediate readiness and their ubiquity, are of great defensive and deterrent value (see Switzerland, Sweden, and Israel, and also Finland).

5. Training and membership in citizen forces is the best means yet devised for fostering a sense of truly democratic, responsible citizenship throughout a nation—a spirit that makes it well-nigh impervious to Communist influence and subversion.

FREDERICK MARTIN STERN
New Rochelle, New York

[More correspondence on this subject will follow.—Ed.]

Morris Hillquit's Socialism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

A curious reprise of recent history was offered in the September issue in the disquisition on Morris Hillquit by your contributing editor, Milton Himmelfarb ["Universalist Elite, Parochial Mass," *In the Community*]. Mr. Himmelfarb's essay seems to have been triggered by an article he read in the March issue of the *Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society* by Arthur Gorenstein. . . . Mr. Himmelfarb's essay begins as follows: "Gorenstein explains why Morris Hillquit, a Russian Jew . . . was not elected to Congress in 1906 and 1908, while Meyer London, the later Socialist nominee . . . was elected three times between 1914 and 1920. . . ."

Dozens of reasons other than those accepted by the team of Gorenstein-Himmelfarb might be offered. For instance, in 1914-1920 there were many more Jewish immigrants in the relevant Congressional districts than there had been in 1906 and 1908. What's more, many of the immigrants were now naturalized citizens and possessed voting qualifications. . . . Important also is the fact that toward the end of the second dec-

ade, the Socialists had well-organized, well-articulated trade unions among Jewish workers. . . . Meyer London had the advantage of these committees when he ran in the latter half of the decade. . . . As for other differences between the two men, obviously they differed in personality, but they never clashed. Their spiritual and cerebral impact on the Jewish populace was almost identical. . . . Indeed, the campaigns of both candidates became holy causes for most of the Jewish population on the East Side. . . .

When the ratio of voters to devotees did change with the years, both London and Hillquit fared very well at the polls during the Socialist party's upsurge. It may come as a surprise to Mr. Himmelfarb, but Hillquit was undoubtedly elected to Congress in 1916. His election was stolen from him. The bi-party election boards in two polling places held off the final count of the ballot past midnight of Election Day after all other districts had already reported. . . . Hillquit had come to these polling places with 500 votes to the good. The districts in question were considered favorable to the Socialists. Yet on the final count, Hillquit was declared a loser by some 350 votes. The East Side, far from jubilant over the Socialist's discomfiture, was in mourning for days thereafter. . . .

It seems monstrous to me that a magazine that presumes to act as a "journal of significant thought on Jewish affairs" should lend itself to so gross a distortion and perversion of the Jewish-immigrant ethos as the one presented by Mr. Himmelfarb *cum* Gorenstein. Doesn't it seem contradictory that Hillquit who, according to Himmelfarb, "could not accommodate himself to the demands of the East Side," nevertheless rolled up such a following that the opposing parties, Tammany and the Republicans, finally formed fusion tickets against him? The paradox must have irritated Mr. Himmelfarb, for he feels constrained to offer supporting testimony. And of all people among the Socialists he brings up Louis Boudin as witness against Hillquit. Comrade Boudin was reputed to have been more content with Hillquit's defeat than with London's victory because of London's supposed emphasis on the Jewish sympathies of his constituents. . . .

As for Hillquit's Jewish associations, he had been one of the founders of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, the precursor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, was a prime mover in the founding of the *Forward*, and wrote in Yiddish for both. . . . Hillquit also was the first secretary of the United Hebrew Trades, an office that entailed much travail and required

constant writing and speaking in Yiddish, constant meeting and agitation among the immigrant Jews of those days. . . .

[Mr. Himmelfarb] puts down as a simple declarative statement that the "Socialist party was against immigration, agreeing with the American Federation of Labor that the bosses were using immigrants to lower wages and fight the unions." . . . The Socialist party was never against immigration; it couldn't have been in view of the preponderant weight immigrant groups carried within it. Neither the party nor Hillquit agreed with the AFL on immigration or on much of anything else. . . . It was not until 1924 that the AFL, under Gompers, gave a little tacit accommodation to Hillquit's point of view when it joined hands with the Socialists in the LaFollette presidential campaign.

Mr. Himmelfarb . . . even implies that Hillquit was indifferent to the pogroms of 1905 in Russia, and thus supposedly offended the East Side Jews; yet Hillquit was sufficiently popular the next year to score a near victory in the election for Congress. According to the Himmelfarb construction, Hillquit was considered the "Socialist Bingham," the latter being the New York police commissioner who delivered himself of the profound observation that "half the criminals in the city were Russian Jews." . . .

I wonder who is the Bingham in our midst . . . if an author can permit himself the following calumny on an entire generation of immigrant Jews: "Why [asks Mr. Himmelfarb] did the radicals disregard or play down Nazism's persecution and murder of Jews? Why was it so important to them to insist that Nazism was merely capitalism *in extremis*? . . . Ordinary Jews were anti-Nazi because they knew Hitler was out to murder the Jews. . . . They were the children of the East Side Tammany voters, and the radical intellectuals were the children of the Hillquit Socialists." . . .

What "radicals" is Mr. Himmelfarb talking about? Does he mean the Communists who contrived all sorts of evasions and excuses for their moral degeneracy when they justified the Stalin-Hitler pact? But Hillquit and his associates fought the Communists bitterly. . . . It was the American intelligentsia, including effete intellectuals and parlor pinks from supposedly "cultural" Jewish homes, who supported the Communists and hampered the efforts of Hillquit-Socialists to expose and defeat them. . . . It's horrible to say of the immigrants who with martyr-like devotion manned the picket

lines, fought the political battles against an unclean enemy, built the unions among Jews in America, ennobled social, cultural, and spiritual values—that these Jews, the fathers and mothers of the major portion of the community, were somehow remiss in spirit, followed false prophets, and trained their children to serve brass idols. What syllogistic monstrosity is this that can persuade a COMMENTARY author to argue that the Jewish Socialists raised a generation of Nazi-lovers? . . .

J. C. RICH

Putnam Valley, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Milton Himmelfarb compares Hillquit's failure to win election to Congress in 1906 and 1908 with London's successes between 1914 and 1920. But—even aside from the fact, which may not be very important, that a lot of the 1906 voters had already moved to Brownsville, Harlem, and the Bronx, and had been replaced by newcomers—a number of other things had changed in the interim. In 1906 the Jewish Socialist movement was still in its infancy. . . . The Socialist-led needle trade strikes of 1909 and 1910 had changed all that. . . . This change was reflected in the Socialist straight-ticket vote. Hillquit received more than 26 per cent of the vote in 1906, at a time when the general Socialist vote in the different parts of the district was between 2 and 3 per cent. This was a more striking personal achievement than was even London's most striking victory in 1914, when he received 49 per cent of the vote as compared to about 12.5 per cent for the ticket.

I have not found any instance in which Hillquit and London were candidates in the same election. . . . However, in 1911 both London and Morris Hillquit's brother, Jacob, were on the party's slate for the same judicial office. While London polled about a tenth more votes than did the straight ticket—this was his usual margin in elections prior to 1914—he ran behind Jacob Hillquit. The latter was not an important figure in his own right; his strength must be attributed to reflected glory from his brother. And whereas London polled about 44 per cent of the vote in 1916 and 43 per cent in 1918, Hillquit's vote for Mayor in 1917 was 47 per cent in the same area. (Comparisons are not precise, because Congressional district lines overlapped those of Assembly districts, and the lines of London's Congressional district were also altered somewhat between elections. In addition, the number of stolen votes is a

variable which cannot be precisely estimated. In the case of Hillquit's 1917 campaign, it may easily have been enough to add 50 per cent to his official total; 20,000 Hillquit ballots were discovered in a single batch that had been thrown into a sewer. London was probably robbed on a smaller scale; the Mayoralty, carrying control over many thousands of jobs, was much more important to Tammany than a single seat in Congress.) . . .

To explain the nonexistent superiority of London to Hillquit as a votegetter, Mr. Himmelfarb cites the supposed anti-immigration policy of the Socialists. This also happens to have been nonexistent. It is true that the Socialists were divided on one aspect of the immigration question—that of Chinese immigration. This, however, was not an aspect on which East Side Jews were passionately aroused; few of them had any Chinese relatives. . . . The definitive statement of the Socialist position was contained in a resolution written by Hillquit and adopted by the 1910 national convention: "The Socialist Party favors all legislative measures tending to prevent the immigration of strike-breakers and contract laborers. . . . *The Party is opposed to the exclusion of any immigrants on account of their race or nationality, and demands that the United States be at all times maintained as a free asylum for all men and women persecuted by the governments of their countries on account of their politics, religion or race.*" [Italics mine.]

Only in one election, that of 1914, did London's vote exceed that of the party as a whole by a margin greater than that normally to be expected in the case of a "strong" candidate. The reasons for this are to be sought . . . in the specific circumstances of the campaign. . . . One is the intense resentment aroused by an attempted frame-up of a number of ILGWU leaders on a murder indictment. Their trial was pending at the time of the 1914 election—and London was the lawyer for the ILGWU, so that a vote for him could have represented a fairly obvious form of protest against the indictment. Another factor, probably less important, is that the Bull Moose movement was still fairly strong in 1914, and a cursory inspection of the election returns seems to indicate that London got most of the Bull Moose vote in the district. He may also have received the support of William Sulzer's followers in the district, resentful at Tammany's impeachment of the latter as Governor. In subsequent elections, of course,

London had the advantage of incumbency. . . .

All this, of course, does not prove Mr. Himmelfarb is wrong in his Marxist belief that East Side Jews voted in terms of their interests, or what they thought were their interests, more frequently than in terms of ideologies. But to a great many of them—and even many who did not vote Socialist—the Socialist party seemed the representative of those interests in a political and economic sense. Tammany, however, represented a lot of immediate personal interests—the bag of coal from the district club in wintertime, the job on the city payroll, the peddler's license, or freedom from police harassment, and so forth. (Also, the Socialists were suspect on religious grounds; one of the key issues when London finally lost his seat in Congress was the charge that he did not eat kosher meat.) There are always lots of immediate personal reasons for disregarding the broad interests of society and the general moral principles applicable to political life; tribalism is only one of the golden calves to which they may be sacrificed.

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am currently engaged in writing a biography of Morris Hillquit, and I was amazed to read Milton Himmelfarb's remarks.

During the election campaigns of 1906 and 1908, Hillquit emphasized the horrible sufferings of the immigrants in the tenement ghetto. Since General Bingham, the police commissioner, had written that half of the criminals in New York were Russian Jews, Himmelfarb maintains that the East Siders considered Hillquit "the Socialist Bingham." . . .

The argument is the same as saying that Negroes equate the civil rights supporter who points out the terrible living conditions in Harlem with the racist who insists the Negro is socially and morally inferior. It is as far-fetched an argument today as it was in 1906, and no more than a smear and a slander.

The same is true when Himmelfarb lumps Hillquit with some radicals who played down Nazism's persecution of Jews. . . . This is an affront to the thousands of socialists—including Hillquit's closest friends—who fought Nazism from its very inception.

Himmelfarb, basing himself on Gorenstein's thesis, explains that Hillquit was defeated in 1906 and 1908 because "the So-

cialist party was against immigration." Whatever one now wants to say about Hillquit's ideas on immigration, he did lead the fight against incorporating literacy qualifications in the Immigration Act. Hillquit's thesis on contract labor was mainly an intellectual exercise for the East Sider. But if the literacy qualifications had been adopted, the flow of East European immigrants to America would have been greatly restricted. This was of immediate concern to the East Sider. Still, Hillquit's vote did decrease from 3,616 in 1906 to 2,483 in 1908, and perhaps the immigration issue was an important factor.

However, Himmelfarb goes on to say that despite the corruption (the Tammany chieftains in the 9th CD bought votes at five dollars a head), Goldfogle, the Tammany candidate, really reflected the needs and aspirations of the East Siders. This is stretching the facts. Gorenstein and all other sources describe the huge rallies that the Socialist party held night after night during the campaigns. The attendance ranged up to 25,000. Yet only 11,698 voted in the 1908 election, out of a population of approximately 350,000. Women could not vote, and only 18.6 per cent of the males were naturalized citizens. Any conclusions based on the voting patterns of such a miniscule minority must be considered speculative and therefore open to question. This is certainly true with regard to Himmelfarb's conclusions.

MEL STACK

Washington, D. C.

MR. HIMMELFARB writes:

If Mr. Goldbloom and Mr. Stack had read the paper by Arthur Gorenstein in the *March Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society*, they might not have written their letters, because they add nothing solid to what the paper says. (It has all their electoral numerology, and more.) Goldbloom not only would have found an instance in which Hillquit and London were candidates in the same election, but also might have thought better about trying to whitewash the Socialists' immigration policy. Gorenstein is familiar with that ringing statement of theirs, and it impresses him no more than it does historians of American Socialism like Shannon and Kipnis.

Goldbloom's conclusion, especially, sounds the true Socialist Bourbon note: to be distracted by an issue like kosher food is tribal; the tribalists also cared tribally about immigration; to refuse to sacrifice to the golden calf of tribalism and to prefer the broad in-

terests of society (e.g., by opposing "the abuse of immigration"—Hillquit's expression—or later by holding fast to a pacifist isolationism) is a moral principle; so three cheers for the Socialists, then and now.

Does Mr. Stack really think that I said Hillquit and his friends were not anti-Nazi? What I said, agreeing with Paul Jacobs in the *New Leader*, was that the radicals of the 1930's seemed to be aware of everything about Nazism except that it was out to murder the Jews. Mr. Stack, annoyed that Hillquit was called the Socialist Bingham, draws an analogy between Harlem today and the East Side fifty years ago. Harlem will appreciate someone who attacks exploiting landlords, but not if he gets too graphic about the degradation they cause.

Mr. Rich rants because he is upset, understandably. Since his movement does not have much of a future, the glorious past becomes all the more sacred to it. Whoever with impious hands touches the hagiology, let him be accursed.

The Jewish masses did so love and respect the Socialists, Rich says, because the Socialists loved and respected *them*. Was that why Abe Cahan wrote in *Bleter fun mayn lebn* that "the number of intelligent people reading a Yiddish newspaper or book was quite small . . . our masses in those days were scarcely advanced"?

Look at all that Yiddish work we did, Rich says; would we have done it if we were not zealous for Jewish culture and survival? He has chosen to forget that for Cahan and many others Yiddish was an unfortunate but necessary second-best to Russian, or German, or English. He can hardly have forgotten, if only because there was a long debate about it recently in his own paper, the *Forward*, that in the Jewish Socialist Bund the doctrine then known as neutralism (i.e., impartiality between assimilation and survival) was dominant, though not binding. The greatest Bundist of them all was Vladimir Medem, whose epitaph in a Workmen's Circle cemetery here is "the legend of the Jewish Labor movement," and he was that kind of neutralist. Yet Medem's European Bund was more pro-Jewish than most of the Socialists in "Jewish work" in America.

Clearly, the radicals I talked about in my comments on the Jacobs article were not Communists. I called them the children of the Hillquit Socialists, and clearly I did not mean flesh-and-blood children necessarily. Rich now defends the Socialists, but during the 30's and 40's he was against them. The

Forward was a big thing in the Social Democratic Federation, which split from the Socialists because it supported the New Deal and rejected isolationism. For the Social Democrats, rightly, Norman Thomas was the man who preached that as long as you had not been cured of your liver ailment, you had no right to protect yourself against a thug set to hit you on the head with a club. (The metaphor was by Reinhold Niebuhr, not a Social Democrat.) Among the Socialists and other radicals were Jews. They were anti-Nazi, of course, but they were also isolationists (even, unlike the Communists, after Hitler sent his troops into Russia), and they would not stoop to the parochialism of worrying about what the Nazis were doing to the Jews of Europe.

Schools in New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Georges Clemenceau once said that war is too important a matter to be left to the generals. After reading Nathan Glazer's article—"Is New York City Ungovernable?"—in the September issue, I am more certain than ever that laymen should leave the schools to educators.

Mr. Glazer is confused by the fact that we are employing more teaching personnel in 1961 for 980,000 pupils than were employed in 1940 for 1,060,000 students. Does this imply that we have greater waste and inefficiency in our schools, or does it mean that we have extended special services, needed in 1940 as well as in 1961? . . .

Mr. Glazer appears to have gotten on the bandwagon that condemns the New York City educational system because of scandals that have been revealed and because of the existence of red tape. . . . If the city's educational system is so defective, how does he explain the out-of-proportion number of Westinghouse, National Merit, and other awards that are won each year by New York students? It would be most profitable for Mr. Glazer to compare the college records of graduates of our high schools with those from other school systems. . . .

Mr. Glazer deprecates the inbreeding that exists in our school system. Is he cognizant of the fact that our teaching exams are open to all who wish to apply? . . . Is it the fault of the Board of Examiners that few non-New Yorkers apply and that many of those who do apply cannot pass these exams? Would he have us abolish examinations and institute practices that might result in nepotism and favoritism?

There may be "mysteries" for Mr. Glazer in the educational situation. There are no mysteries for those of us who are members of the New York City educational system. Firstly, New York City suffers, as does the rest of the country, from a shortage of qualified teachers. Yes, despite Mr. Glazer's feeling on the matter, more money is needed. . . . Maximum salaries of \$3,310 to \$4,500 in the 1930's attracted a surplus of teachers to the New York City school system. With a maximum today of \$9,450 we are unable to fill all positions with regularly-licensed teachers. Secondly, we need more money to cope with problems peculiar to our city and for which inadequate funds were appropriated in 1940. . . .

ALFRED NUSSBAUM
Principal

John Wilson Junior High School 211
Brooklyn, New York

Labor and Civil Rights

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Tom Brooks's article on "Negro Militants, Jewish Liberals, and the Unions" [September], is perceptive and thought-provoking. While it contains a number of factual errors, it is emotionally correct. And that depresses me more than if it were totally wrong.

As director of the American Jewish Committee's National Labor Service, I should like to add a few observations. Contrary to Mr. Brooks's assertion that the NLS has more and more been "placed in the position of defending the official line of organized labor," ever since the AFL-CIO San Francisco convention in 1959, our articles and speeches have been increasingly critical of shortcomings within the labor movement and have proposed drastic remedies. So drastic indeed that our last article was denounced by a white union leader as a "scurrilous attack" on his union.

In discussing the disagreements between Herbert Hill, NAACP labor secretary, Emanuel Muravchik of the Jewish Labor Committee, and myself, Mr. Brooks transforms them into "growing antagonism between the Jewish and Negro labor camps." The sensationalist segment of the Negro press has echoed this theme. A much more sophisticated reaction came from one of the top labor leaders of the Negro American Labor Council who said: "I get a kick out of seeing you Jews—Herb, Manny, and you—arguing about us Negroes." . . .

Certainly there is disagreement on tactics, but no basic dispute between the NALC and

NLS—no more than there is a basic dispute between the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the NAACP. We have not only praised the vigor of the NALC in pushing the fight within the labor movement against discrimination, but have urged that it intensify that role. At the same time we have said that where the labor movement does a good job on civil rights, the best approach is to praise such progress. We have been critical of Herbert Hill and the NALC when either failed to recognize this factor of human psychology.

Yet candor compels us to admit that when we expressed this point of view with another top NALC leader, his reaction was: "It's perfectly legitimate for organizations like the National Labor Service and the National Urban League to adopt such an approach. But the NALC cannot do it. We are in the midst of a civil rights revolution, and if we concede that progress is being made, it would dull the edge of the revolutionary ardor of the Negro masses." As a result, so bitter is the conflict now between Negro and labor groups over the tempo of ending discrimination that there is a tendency for the middle ground to become an arena for pot shots from both sides.

Roy Wilkins, NAACP executive secretary, noted a year or so ago that "a tremendous change in the image of the labor movement has taken place in the minds of Negroes. Where, forty years ago, most Negroes viewed the labor movement as an instrument to discriminate against Negroes, Negroes now overwhelmingly see labor as a natural—if too hesitant—ally in the fight for civil rights." Yet the conservative *Detroit Free Press*, as Wilkins sagely reminds us, "editorially chuckled with glee over the prospect of a split between labor and the NAACP, and does not conceal its relief at the possibility that the public will not have 'arrayed before it allied organizations' fighting for Negro civil rights." In a pluralist society such as ours, there is need *both* for the *push* of Negro groups demanding speedier action on civil rights and the *pull* of idealism through praise for labor groups that make progress in ending discrimination. . . .

HARRY FLEISCHMAN
Director

National Labor Service
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the interest of accuracy I should first like to comment on two errors of fact. . . . Mr. Brooks refers to "NAACP demands for

investigation into discrimination at the Marietta, Georgia, plant of Republic Aviation." The complaints filed with the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity by the Association were against the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation in Marietta.

Mr. Brooks states that I refer to Emanuel Muravchik and Harry Fleischman as "apologists for racism." What I did write was as follows: "Messrs. Fleischman and Muravchik and their respective organizations would do well if they ceased to apologize for the racists in the American labor movement. . . ."

Mr. Fleischman is quoted as stating that "Hill's approach discourages good guys from pushing civil rights . . . they want to get credit for things done." The essential point here is that what constitutes progress or "getting things done" for Mr. Fleischman or for the Jewish Labor Committee is usually not accepted as such by Negro workers and the Negro community.

The fact is that since the AFL-CIO merger in 1955, very limited progress has been made in eliminating discrimination and segregation within organized labor. On occasion there has been token compliance with a state or municipal statute, but this is essentially a limited and strategic adjustment to community pressure which does not really change the racial pattern. . . .

The crucial question here which Mr. Brooks did not pose in his article is that certain Jewish organizations have become publicly identified with a small group of labor leaders who currently are under attack by Negro trade unionists . . . because of labor union practices on racial issues involving the welfare of the entire Negro community. No one expects the Jewish Labor Committee or the National Labor Service of the American Jewish Committee to behave like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or the Negro American Labor Council, but as one well-known Negro labor leader asks: "Why are they finking on us?" . . . And indeed why are they? . . .

Certainly the Jewish community is not made more secure nor is the cause of Negro rights advanced by the extravagant press releases, the inappropriate testimonial dinners, the awkward civil rights awards, and the interminable self-serving conferences which are the daily stock-in-trade of the "labor civil rights spokesmen" who obscure the truth and make more difficult the real battle.

HERBERT HILL
Labor Secretary

NAACP
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Tom Brook's essay depicts the Negro American Labor Council as being antagonistic toward the Jewish Labor Committee and the American Jewish Committee's National Labor Service. . . . Mr. Brooks describes NALC's activities by impression rather than by fact. His references to the Negro Labor Committee and its failure to become a permanent organization; to NALC being a "middle class" organization (there were over 800 delegates at NALC's founding convention who were rank-and-file workers); to NALC's local activities (as Mr. Brooks sees it, the Detroit Chapter is "political," Chicago is "vocational training," and New York is "fund-raising"); to NALC being unable to mount a community-wide offensive against job discrimination; to equating the functions of the NAACP labor secretary with NALC—all reveal a profound lack of information, or gross misconception, to say the least.

Mr. Brooks could have more usefully analyzed the relationship between the AFL-CIO and the JLC and NLS on civil rights, with a view to explaining realistically why these two agencies speak for the AFL-CIO on civil rights. Along these lines, could he not have explored the significance of JLC's and NLS's attempts to speak for black workers with equal or greater authority than an organization serving as the instrumentality of black workers in their struggle for liberation? He could also have attempted to demonstrate the "strong pressure" the Muslims have exerted on NALC rather than superficially alluding to "signs."

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Brooks has not factual command of the subjects he impressionistically covers in his essay. . . . In characterizing NALC as anti-Semitic, Mr. Brooks must be held responsible for adding to an already confused pattern of race relations. . . .

Where Mr. Brooks suggests the need for drastic action to alleviate chronic unemployment and to prevent discriminatory employment generally, and states that there is a "pressing need on the part of organized labor for strong and imaginative action against discrimination—particularly against barriers in the building trades," he touches upon, albeit indirectly, some of the basic objectives of the Negro American Labor Council.

JAMES HAUGHTON

Negro American Labor Council
Greater New York Chapter
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Being a member of a labor union, and living in a mixed neighborhood . . . I feel I have some authority in concurring with Tom Brooks. . . .

Today's color phobia, misunderstood by the radicals and conservatives alike, is deep and serious. The new Negro . . . is militant and anti-white. . . .

MELVIN N. COHEN

Baltimore, Maryland

MR. BROOKS writes:

I stand corrected by Mr. Hill as to which aviation company has a plant in Marietta, Georgia; I leave it to the reader to judge the error of the second "fact."

While Mr. Haughton has my sympathy, I suggest that he—and others interested—re-read my article more closely. I did not, incidentally, characterize the NALC as anti-Semitic.

Otherwise, the letters of Messrs. Fleischman, Hill, and Haughton, I believe, confirm what I had to say about the unhappy dissolution of the Negro-Jewish civil rights coalition.

Algeria, the Jews, and France

[Owing to an oversight on our part, Ray Alan was delayed in sending us his reply to several letters which appeared in the November 1961 issue commenting on his contribution to the controversy on "Algerian Independence and the Jews" (June 1961). We regret any embarrassment that this may have caused Mr. Alan, who is an old and valued contributor to COMMENTARY. And we wish to make it clear that we in no sense endorse the political characterization of him suggested by one of his critics in the November issue. In accordance with the usual procedures, which permit the last word to the original author, Mr. Alan's reply below will bring discussion of this subject to a close.—ED.]

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Fabre appears to take the slippery Mr. Blumenfeld at his face value and to believe that the latter is gallantly defending "the regeneration of France under de Gaulle" against "embittered Mendèsist" attack (though why Mendèsist I don't know: I personally would not advocate M. Mendès-France's return to the premiership in present circumstances: the outcome would probably be civil war). He should read Mr. Blumenfeld's June outburst more carefully. In it,

he will find Mr. Blumenfeld accusing de Gaulle of employing the French army to force the Europeans of Algeria to "accept extermination," regretting that Soustelle is *not* "scurrying about hatching plots," etc. Is not this the idiom of *Rivarol*? (De Gaulle, in an interview with a Gaullist journalist and Member of Parliament, Pierre Laffont, has himself said: "the cause of *Algérie française* is the revenge of the Pétainists.")

This discussion is complicated by the fact that while Joseph Barry [see "Controversy," June 1961] and I were traveling about France in May 1958, observing for ourselves, Mr. Blumenfeld appears to have relied for his vision of what was happening on the weeklies of the rabidly anti-democratic (and now anti-Gaullist) extreme right. He is known to the French Sûreté for his connection with some kind of public relations operation on behalf of the anti-Gaullist *ultras*, and in order to divert attention from the tainted sources of his own misinformation he evidently feels obliged to abuse those of us who try to peer behind the propagandist smokescreens of extreme right and extreme left.

Thus he trots out the *Rivarol* propaganda line that the Algiers riot-plus-mutiny of May 13, 1958, was "the most significant regenerative event in French history since 1940" and accuses me of "astounding ignorance" when I try to put it into perspective. Like *Rivarol* he obviously lacks enthusiasm for the Liberation of France after Hitler's war, and I can understand his astonishment that I should consider the Liberation, the establishment of the Monnet planning organization, and France's participation in the Common Market, far more significant "regenerative events" than the antics of Lagailarde and his friends in Algeria. Happily, most Frenchmen agree with me. The major French architect of the Liberation is now President of France; the organizers of the May 13 nonsense in Algiers are either in jail or in exile and would be lynched if they appeared in public in any major French city.

It will not have escaped the attention of your regular readers that in his letter in your November issue Mr. Blumenfeld backs down. Instead of defending his previous assertion that the May 13 uprising amounted to a great French "Revolution" (his capital letter), he is content now to insist on its effectiveness in Algiers, citing "any number of authorities," including my excellent colleague Hal Lehrman. This was not the issue. Unlike Mr. Blumenfeld, neither Lehrman

(who was in Algiers at the time, not in France) nor any other competent observer I know of has claimed that there was a "Revolution" or even a revolutionary atmosphere in France. Even the propagandist Bromberger brothers, who sought to justify the Algiers uprising by exaggerating popular discontent with the Fourth Republic, let slip in their book, *Les 13 complots du 13 mai*, several admissions that France was in no mood to follow the example of the Algiers extremists: in six or more passages they admit that "*le climat à Paris n'est pas à la révolution*". . . . "*la France ne suit pas Alger*". . . . "The Algiers committee is exasperated by lack of support in France," etc.

Far from being filled with revolutionary ardor by the Algiers disorders, the average Frenchman considered de Gaulle a convenient compromise between the weak men in the Palais Bourbon and the wild men across the water; he looked to de Gaulle (whose candidates he had rejected only a few weeks earlier in the *élections cantonales*) for an emergency operation that would put the *pièdes noirs* and their mutinous military friends in their places and then clean up the whole Algerian mess. (The Socialists, for example, agreed to support de Gaulle only after Mollet and Defferre had received his personal assurance that he was opposed to the *Algérie française* theme of the Algiers *ultras*.) Nothing could have been less like a "Revolution." But presumably Mr. Blumenfeld considers this year's Challe-Salan mutiny a glorious "Revolution" too, and the bomb-toting thugs of the OAS (a terrorist organization financed by Mr. Blumenfeld's Algerian friends) glorious "Revolutionaries."

The remainder of Mr. Blumenfeld's letter is padded out with the kind of wild distortions one might expect of a man who can consider the FLN "at least as dangerous" as Hitler! The "Algerian Moslem nationalists" do not advocate "racist national socialism" (a bigger danger is that they may swing to the extreme left). I have never suggested that "the only solution to the Jewish problem in Algeria is a mass exodus to Israel"; I have never supported either the FLN or fascism. And who, outside of Mr. Blumenfeld's mental universe, has ever "pinned the fascist label on all of Algeria's Europeans"? I am beginning to suspect that Mr. Blumenfeld can't read English.

RAY ALAN

Paris, France

VOICES OF POVERTY

THE CHILDREN OF SANCHEZ. By OSCAR LEWIS. Random House. 499 pp. \$7.50.

Reviewed by EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG

THIS BOOK is altogether superb. Professor Lewis does what he undertakes to do dramatically yet unobtrusively, and with a degree of taste and craftsmanship that is unlikely to be fully appreciated however much the work is praised, because the format is unfamiliar to most readers. Only a social scientist who has worked with recorded interview materials knows what is involved in editing these in such a way that the life and character of the speaker are revealed and made clear to the reader. It is a measure of the author's skill that most readers may well think that Jesus Sanchez and his sons and daughters wrote the book while Professor Lewis, after introducing them briefly, just took down what they said.

By letting the central figures tell their own stories at firsthand, Lewis gives the work an immediacy and vividness that are completely compelling. This is a book that will reach almost any reader on his own terms, whether he is looking for an adventure story, a complex and subtle account of human development and disintegration over thirty years' time, or a basic anthropological study. Moreover, since Manuel, Consuelo, Roberto, and Marta are siblings and involved in the same events, Lewis's Rashomon-like technique of presenting portions of the account of each consecutively and independently fills the book with moments of revelation as we see how each participant is blinded and paralyzed by his own character at crucial junctures in his destiny.

So it is possible to read *The Children of Sanchez* as if it were an unusually profound picaresque novel, a detailed and fugally intricate picture of Mexican social life in the lower—though not quite the lowest—depths,

or as an unbearably pathetic human document. It is even possible to take it as a soap-opera of unparalleled lubricity; for while Mr. Lewis's treatment of his materials does not encourage this, the Sanchez family do. Most middle-class readers, I predict, will feel revulsion as well as pity for them and their difficulties.

When one finally finishes the book, the last lines of *Othello* come curiously, and not altogether sympathetically, to mind:

*No more of that. I pray you in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must
you speak*

*Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought
Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose
hand*

Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away.

LODOVICO: *O bloody period!*

It may be well for the reader to accept this and not wear himself out trying to see the Sanchez' as lovable. Despite Lewis's obviously deep respect and concern for them, and despite the fact that (except for a thirty-page introduction) the whole book is their personal narrative, they are not really the occasion for writing it; and its subject far transcends them.

What Lewis is concerned about, both personally and professionally, is poverty. He is perfectly explicit about that in his introduction:

In the nineteenth century, when the social sciences were still in their infancy, the job of recording the effects of the process of industrialization and urbanization on personal and family life was left to novelists, playwrights, journalists, and social reformers. Today a similar process of culture change is going on among the people of the less-developed countries, but we find no comparable outpouring of a universal literature which would help us to improve our understanding of the process and the

people. . . . This situation presents a unique opportunity to the social sciences and particularly to anthropology to step into the gap and develop a literature of its own. Sociologists, who have pioneered in studying urban slums, are now concentrating their attention on suburbia to the relative neglect of the poor. Today, even most novelists are so busy probing the middle-class soul that they have lost touch with the problems of poverty and the realities of a changing world. As C. P. Snow has recently stated: "Sometimes I am afraid that people in rich countries . . . have so completely forgotten what it is like to be poor that we can no longer feel or talk with the less lucky. This we must learn to do."

Lewis has certainly learned to do both, and in the process has defined for himself a special professional interest within anthropology of the greatest and most general human significance:

To those who think that the poor have no culture, the concept of a culture of poverty may seem like a contradiction in terms. It would also seem to give to poverty a certain dignity and status. This is not my intention. . . . I want to draw attention to the fact that poverty in modern nations is not only a state of economic deprivation, of disorganization, or of the absence of something. It is also something positive in the sense that it has a structure, rationale, and defense mechanisms without which the poor could hardly carry on. In short, it is a way of life. . . . The culture or subculture of poverty comes into being in a variety of historical contexts. Most commonly it develops when a stratified social and economic system is breaking down or is being replaced by another. . . . It seems to me that the culture of poverty has some universal characteristics which transcend regional, rural-urban, and even national differences. . . . Although this is not the place for an extensive comparative analysis of the culture of poverty, I should like to elaborate upon some of these and other traits in order to present a provisional conceptual model of this culture based mainly upon my Mexican materials.

In the next two pages of the introduction he does so; and the narratives of the individual members of the Sanchez family brilliantly illuminate his observations. Abstractly stated, the characteristics of poverty

have lost their power to shock; "frequent use of physical violence in the training of children" and "a strong predisposition to authoritarianism" do not sound too bad until their victims talk about what actually happened to them. All modern life, to be sure, is made bearable by pretending that experiences are identical with the rubrics under which they are classified for administrative purposes: this is Eichmann's Law. There is very little left of this illusion after the Sanchez children have told the stories of their lives to early middle age, each revealing through his personal biases and omissions the full horror of what he has helped inflict on the others. The father, Jesus, is not very appropriately named; in his rigid, upright malevolence, sexual exploitativeness, and combined responsibility toward property and suspiciousness and callousness toward people, he is a character wholly at variance with the New Testament. As for his sons and daughters, each emerges, through hundreds of pages of narrative monologue, as a unique and engrossing personality. Lewis has rendered their highly colloquial argot into an English which seems not merely to retain the Spanish character of the original but to distinguish and illuminate the young speakers themselves.

We leave them in the middle of their lives, perhaps no more trapped than ourselves and certainly no less aware of being trapped, but in danger and discomfort that we could not bear for a month. Neither can they, of course; the damage is irreparable; they are still there and nothing important has changed, except themselves.

And not for the better; there are no incidents in which the Sanchez' transcend their condition or their character. This is not to say that they emerge as squalid, Erskine Caldwell caricatures; on the contrary. They retain, on the whole, much more courage and a little more dignity than people generally do; but the circumstances of their lives make it clearer than the circumstances of ours do that this is not enough for survival. Our novelists usually try to protect us from too much reality by drawing the poor—when they draw them at all—as either buffoons or tragic heroes; and, indeed, it is hard to see what else could flourish under the conditions Lewis depicts. The Sanchez', unfortunately, are neither.

The Children of Sanchez, however, resembles a novel less than it does a Breughel painting. Vivid and minutely detailed, it is so masterfully organized that it remains completely lucid and its pattern is never obscured. The book is deeply moving, in parts earthily comic, and extremely colorful; but the color, brilliant as it is, never makes the picture cheerful. The Sanchez' have their times of revelry, fervor, and passion; but not tranquil joy or affection. Dionysus blesses them from time to time; Apollo never. The commonplace picture of life among the poor as roughly tender and warm, to which so many middle-class people wistfully contrast their own pallid comforts, is shattered by Lewis's observations. None of the five central characters relates any experience of sustained, mutual emotional acceptance, though they form relationships that last for years. Even the world of Jules Feiffer is cozier.

This clearly is their tragedy. There seems to be a vicious dialectic at play. Among these poor, the people like Roberto who remain loving and affectionate take such a beating that they have no self-confidence left; they never learn how fine they really are and spend their lives in flight. Thus, Roberto as a young man:

I missed my mother then, and I still miss her. Since her death I felt I could never be happy again. Some people feel relieved when they talk about their troubles, but I've told this to many people and it has never helped. I feel calm only when I run away, when I go off as a vagabond, when I am alone in the country or up in the mountains. I believe if my mother were still alive I'd be very different. Or perhaps I'd be worse.

I wanted to make a kite of my life and fly it in any field.

Those like Consuelo, who drive themselves to acquire enough education and middle-class habits to hold on to respectable life by their fingernails, become too angry and exhausted to respond to love when they find it; while her comments on her brother, Manuel, who also is troubled by aspirations, leave both of them hanging in full view:

Of the three, Manuel had the hardest heart. He was never there when he was needed and even if he were, nothing con-

cerned him. He reminded me of a person walking backwards in darkness, without setting foot upon solid ground. He walked and walked and got nowhere. He just moved his legs to give people the impression he was doing something. His gaze was fixed upon little stars shining in the firmament. He tried to catch them and when he managed to get one, he would sit down there in the infinite emptiness and play with it until the dazzling light lost its power. Then he would leave the dead star floating in the air, and go irresistibly after another.

Others, like sister Marta, simply and shortly descend into sluttishness, turning every proposition life makes to them into something dishonorable by their intense—and usually shrewdly justified—suspicions. One of the minor revelations of this work is how little good sex does the children of Sanchez, even though it seems to take up most of their attention and energy. D. H. Lawrence, surely, learned even less than usual from his Mexican experiences. For the people of the *vecindade Casa Grande*, sex is no primal source of renewal. They use it as *rentiers* use the stock market; as a distraction, a *raison d'être*, a status symbol, a defense against anxiety, and sometimes for the sake of revenue and security. Of course, it makes them very nervous.

"This method of multiple biographies," Lewis writes, "also tends to reduce the element of investigator bias because the accounts are not put through the sieve of a middle-class North American mind but are given in the words of the subjects themselves. In this way, I believe I have avoided the two most common hazards in the study of the poor, namely, oversentimentalization and brutalization. Finally, I hope that this method preserves for the reader the emotional satisfaction and understanding which the anthropologist experiences in working directly with his subjects but which is only rarely conveyed in the formal jargon of anthropological monographs."

How brilliantly he has succeeded! The effect, however, is devastating. Sentimentality and brutality are two aspects of the same pathetic fallacy. When both are avoided we are forced to see the children of Sanchez in all their alienation.

Compare lovable Alfred Doolittle, lustily singing "Get Me to the Church on Time!"

in nostalgic tribute to the non-respectable poor, with Jesus Sanchez, the real article:

Another man would be in jail by now! But I value my freedom and never looked for unmarried girls. No! All my women had already been married before I lived with them. Otherwise, there would be complications. If they had been virgins, I would probably have had to marry one of them in church or by civil law, or I would be in jail for twenty years!

Our alienation is not very different, but we feel betrayed by it. Though we continually fail one another miserably as sources of love and devotion, our culture nevertheless continues, feebly, to assert that these should exist. Education has done this much for us, anyway; we still have an idea what a hero or a lover would look like if they made them any more. Being the sort of people we are, we use the recollection to pity and delude ourselves, but we still possess it.

The children of Sanchez must manage without these necessities. They know that they have been cheated, and their resentment is perhaps the most potent political factor of the 20th century. But they are prevented by the culture of poverty from formulating precisely what they are deprived of; they do not really believe that it exists. At least, not enough do at any one time to support each other by trust and devotion. This, alone, is what has saved the rich so far. We have always been able to assume that the poor would be jealous of us for the wrong reasons.

ZIONISM AND THE JEWS

THE IDEA OF THE JEWISH STATE. By BEN HALPERN. *Harvard University Press*. 500 pp. \$10.00.

Reviewed by ELIE KEDOURIE

MR. HALPERN'S treatise sets out to be, not a history of the Zionist movement, or even of Zionist thought, but an analysis, as the word goes, of certain Zionist notions in terms of what "social scientists" call a "conceptual framework," the main lines of which the author indicates in an Appendix entitled "Assumptions, Methods, and Terms." The book is thus a tricky one for a reviewer to de-

scribe and appraise: it contains bits of history, some of them very good, such as the author's appraisal, in Chapter 9, of the true nature and ground of the Palestinians' opposition to Zionism, or his description, in Chapter 6, of Weizmann's policies and activities in the 1920's from the rift with Brandeis until the formation of the extended Jewish Agency. But since history, political or intellectual, is not the author's prime concern, it is difficult to set down in short compass the aim of the book, or to say with any precision how well it has been accomplished.

It is therefore perhaps best to begin by looking at some of Mr. Halpern's concepts, since they govern his treatment of the material in the two sections into which his book is broadly divided: the section on the relations between Zionism and world Jewry, and that on the relations between Zionism and the international community. Two of these concepts, in particular, recur again and again in the book; those of consensus and sovereignty, and we may say that Mr. Halpern's object appears to be an examination of Zionism as an expression of the consensus of Jewry, and as a method of bringing about and maintaining the sovereignty of the Jewish people. We may add that doubts concerning this book largely arise from the ambiguity and vagueness in the use of these two terms.

"Consensus" is nowhere directly defined, but we may understand the author's use of the term from the way in which it is first introduced to the reader. "Pre-Emancipation Jewry," he writes in his first chapter, "displayed a remarkable unity, continuing over vast stretches of time and space. Their solidarity rested upon an effective consensus that united them among themselves and set them apart from the environment in regard to both religious culture and communal organization." It is the author's case that the Enlightenment and the Emancipation destroyed this consensus, but that it is now re-established—focusing, however, not on the traditional community and the creed as defined by the rabbis, but on Zionism and the State of Israel. That there was a consensus in traditional Jewry nobody is likely to question; doubts will arise concerning the more recent period. It is now a matter of opinion whether or not Zionism represents a consensus in Jewry, and Mr. Halpern's book is

unsatisfactory to the extent that, after reading it, this still remains a matter of opinion. Mr. Halpern is diligent, learned, and painstaking in presenting the numerous varieties of Zionist, non-Zionist, and anti-Zionist views; but on the crucial question, whether or not Zionism represents a consensus in Jewry, we are left in the dark. Thus when we are informed that "in the closing years of the First World War, the resistance of ideological non-Zionists to Zionist demands had set them against the communal consensus," we are by no means satisfied; we feel that what ought to be proved is here taken for granted and that a crucial step in the argument has been missed. Our doubts are not set at rest when we find the author using the word "people" in a special way, writing that "the 'people' had already turned to Herzl. Zionists and student groups from near and far placed themselves at his disposal. . . ." We wonder if Zionists and student groups can be equated with a people, even a people that lives in inverted commas. Again, when we are told in passing that after World War I ideological anti-Zionism showed considerable power in Eastern Europe, we wonder how considerable this power was and how it affected the communal consensus, and again our curiosity, on a crucial point, is left unsatisfied. Since the existence or nonexistence of a consensus is not established, may it not be then that a treatment of Zionism in terms of a communal consensus is bound to be question-begging; that, in fact, the success and spread of Zionism had little to do with it, and much to do with matters over which Zionists and Jews had little control, such as the policies of the British government in 1917 and 1947, the Nazi terror, the incapacity of the Arab League, etc?

Dissatisfaction with the term sovereignty parallels our misgivings about consensus. Sovereignty is a term of (legal) science, as well as one of (oratorical) art. The word, the author writes, "represents the very core of the subject of this volume," yet, as he also says, he has assigned no precisely defined technical meaning to it. To him, it expresses "the sudden passionate conviction that only by freeing themselves by an active effort of their own national will would Jews be able to solve the Jewish problem." Such a usage is bound to involve the writer in hopeless ambiguities.

Sovereignty is the capacity to perform sovereign acts: when we say that the war against Egypt in 1956 or the organization of Zionist underground activities among Jewish communities in Arab countries were sovereign acts of the State of Israel, we are readily understood. If we say that these are acts of Jewish sovereignty, does it follow that the Jewish communities of Iraq and Egypt participated in these acts, which, in effect, led to their own undoing, or are we to say that these communities do not share in Jewish sovereignty? This concept, then, does not make for clarity; rather it contributes to the reader's perplexity. Moreover, is it possible to accommodate without ambiguity all varieties of Jewish thinking within this concept of Jewish sovereignty? Is it permissible to describe, as the author does, Agudist thinking as concerned with the re-establishment of "Jewish sovereignty upon its legitimate basis, the strict tradition"? Do we not know, in fact, that rabbinical thought utterly rejects the idea of human sovereignty, reserving such omnipotence to God alone?

MR. HALPERN'S general scheme is thus open to question; his account of Zionism as a doctrine is likewise, at some points, debatable. Zionism he rightly describes as a nationalist doctrine, but he thinks that it is to be distinguished from other nationalisms which ordinarily develop in countries where an autochthonous mass is ruled by foreigners, since the Jews were themselves oppressed by the autochthonous masses of Eastern Europe. But is this not precisely the case of the Armenians whose persecution by the Ottoman government had the wholehearted support of the Moslem population? In any event, is the distinction at all worth making when we consider that Nazism, the *reductio ad absurdum* of nationalism, arose in a country which was not and had never been ruled by foreigners?

A point, finally, worth noticing is that the author considers that "the fundamental movement of Zionism, emotionally even more than intellectually, is away from the Enlightenment and back toward tradition." Such a statement bristles with difficulty. The inventors of Zionism were the "emancipated" and the "enlightened" of Eastern and Central Europe, one of whose firmest

instincts was to mock and depreciate traditional Judaism, and who had no use for religion as a discipline of the moral and spiritual life. The inventors of Zionism were not traditionalists but radicals who wanted to recreate Judaism and Jewish life into something shining and new, discarding, in the process, all elements which were not to their purpose, whether in Eastern Europe where Orthodoxy still reigned, or in the West where Emancipation was a political and social reality. As an example of Zionist respect for traditional Jewry, the author quotes a passage in which Ahad Ha'am jeers uncharitably at "Jewish professors, Jewish members of Academies, Jewish officers in the army, Jewish civil servants." Yet in this same passage, the so-called traditionalist to whom Jewish professors were an offense gives himself license to remain a Jew while adopting any heresy he chose. And why? Simply because he was an Easterner, of the virtuous Eastern mass, not a Westerner, bourgeois, well-to-do, and corrupt. This, if you like, is Russian populism, but it is hardly traditional Judaism.

TAKING IN CALIFORNIA

NO FURTHER WEST. By DAN JACOBSON.
Macmillan. 127 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ELMER BORKLUND

FOR A VARIETY of reasons, perhaps, Americans are far from being as sensitive or as vulnerable as they once were to the opinions and verdicts of literate visitors. We may be intrigued by what Kenneth Tynan and Simone de Beauvoir have to report, but we seem to *care* less, having learned to listen attentively to the skillful native critics our initial insecurity and self-consciousness have produced in such remarkable numbers. Too much has happened that only an American can understand; too many thoughtful analysts are always present at the merest hint of a crime for us to respond with more than polite interest to the judgments of our guests. And America is, of course, so much more accessible, so much less "different" in some articulate areas than it once was: as C. P. Snow remarks in quite another context, one crosses the Atlantic only to find "Greenwich

Village talking precisely the same language as Chelsea." Instead of Mrs. Trollope we have the typical British intellectual, predictably eager to visit America, read American books, and perhaps even set up courses in American Studies at home. All the more reason, then, to be grateful for *No Further West*, which reminds us of how much we may still learn from an independent outsider. Dan Jacobson is anything but the typical visiting British intellectual. He writes here for Americans as much as for a British audience: he writes, that is, for himself, observing California rather than East Coast culture, with a novelist's sharp sense of paradoxes in American life and character.

Our attitudes toward the West Coast are usually uninformed, confused, and contradictory. We tend to dismiss California especially in cliché terms, although basically we know very little about it, filling in or improvising with some romantic notions about an unsettled and open part of our culture. Almost exactly fifty years ago, Santayana, tired and contemptuous of Boston ("a moral and intellectual nursery," he calls it in his autobiography, "always busy applying first principles to trifles"), visited the West, and was struck by the vastness of the country. California, it seemed, might be a place where one could still live the life of the mind, and he told his surprised audience: "It is the yoke of this genteel tradition itself that these primeval solitudes lift from your shoulders. . . . You learn what you are really fitted to do, and where lie your natural dignity and joy, namely, in representing many things, without being them, and in letting your imagination, through sympathy, celebrate and echo their life. . . . Let us therefore be frankly human."

As one might expect, Jacobson's first impressions provide ironic commentary on these high hopes. The primeval solitude has been tamed, scarred and subdivided and punctuated by superhighways, suburbs, and billboards; and in its place is "a sprawl, a mess, a nightmare of repetition and disjunction and incoherence, all grown permanent and powerful." Instead of offering a new frontier to the most adventurous fugitives from the genteel tradition, it seems to confirm one's worst fears about total Americanization: "the uniformity that is spreading faster and faster over the whole habitable

globe . . . the disappearance of order and particularity and continuity in the life of the human individual and in individual society . . . the cramming of more and more people into an ever-closer contiguity that serves only to make each one of them more anonymous, discrete, incoherent, isolated, capable only of the most frictive and trivial relationships." If this were all, we would have simply one more safely pessimistic appraisal of American life. But *No Further West* is divided into two major sections (written, one supposes, near the beginning and end of Jacobson's year in California), and it is the first part which concludes with these depressing prospects. What gives the book its particular value is Jacobson's unwillingness to let it go at that—his persistence in getting beneath the appalling surface. His analysis is unexpected, and in the best sense undocumented: it springs from a tough, individual encounter with a unique problem in the understanding of others, and it has about it the artist's rather than the sociologist's ring of authority and conviction.

THE SPECTACLE of "uprooted semi-nomadic people living in a world of cheap-jack goods" is challenged by an equally strong impression that Americans themselves belie their surroundings. The people Jacobson meets are quiet and skillful, intent on finding some privacy, peace, and fulfillment even in this most unlikely of settings. "The most obvious characteristic of the mass-media is their loudness; the most remarkable characteristic of the sort of Americans we saw . . . was their quietness." Jacobson's response to this paradox is more, I think, than a novelist's lucky shot in the dark. Possibly, he speculates, Americans, rather than finding their reflections in the media, use the media as a kind of protective covering, as a ritual expression of the vulgarity and violence they are supposed to represent—and perhaps half-believe in themselves. "The media relieve them of their responsibility as Americans to be violent and assertive and noisy. Reassured that there is a populated and powerful 'America' of violence and assertion, the Americans themselves are able to go on being as quiet and moderate as they like. . . ."

After some observations about Stanford (disappointingly brief and bland, possibly

because Jacobson was in America on a grant from Stanford's creative writing program) and a quick, sharp look at the Beats ("the success of these writers illuminates nothing but the bankruptcy of our fashionable literary life"), Jacobson in effect makes a convincing reversal of his first conclusions. Granted that American life lacks the kind of center which Europeans can accept (and which American intellectuals, relying on European models, often seem to need), America was nevertheless begun by an act of will and is maintained by a prodigious act of will despite enormous difficulties. From the very beginning Americans have looked at the future in terms of ideas, and had the energy to shape their future accordingly: "there is always something new to become, a new demand that circumstances exact and that they are determined to do their human best to meet." Faced with conditions which seemed to encourage nothing but "chaos, disorder, and disruption," Americans, Jacobson concludes, have solved their problems with remarkable success. It is encouraging to watch a gifted writer in the act of discovering that our will remains as restless and inventive as ever, that our thinking remains basically liberal and utopian, that total Americanization, in short, may not be an evil after all: "From the Americans we can learn new respect for our own wills, whose exercise need not always result in enmity, destruction and despair." In the long run this sustained act of will may prove more of an achievement than a simple, romantic escape from the genteel tradition. It may end yet in a new chance to be frankly human.

PREJUDICE AND EDUCATION

EDUCATION AND ATTITUDE CHANGE—THE EFFECT OF SCHOOLING ON PREJUDICE AGAINST MINORITY GROUPS. By CHARLES HERBERT STEMMER. *Institute of Human Relations Press*. 182 pp. \$4.00.

Reviewed by LEWIS A. COSER

MOST AMERICANS look upon education as a kind of secular magic: allegedly it can cure most social ills if it is only applied in sufficiently large doses. Not too surprisingly then, many professional social psychologists have dogmatically assumed that prejudice within

a population invariably decreases as the level of education increases. Such beliefs, crude as they may be, also creep into the work of students who, in other respects, are most sophisticated. Thus, a leading sociologist, Seymour Lipset, in his recent and otherwise very careful analysis of political attitudes in *Political Man*, assumes that tolerance increases "with higher educational level."

The main merit of Professor Stember's excellent book, however discomfiting its results, is to show that such assertions simply do not stand up when confronted with available evidence. The author has re-analyzed a number of large-scale public opinion surveys—most of them with national samples—conducted from 1944 to 1959; he has also considered the findings of several smaller studies which were limited to a few cities. His results show clearly that there exists no simple unilinear relation between education and prejudice.

To be sure, the cruder forms of anti-Semitic and anti-Negro stereotypes are to be found among the uneducated more frequently than among the educated. Fewer of the latter believe, say, that "Negro blood is not the same as white." On the other hand, they believe more often than do the less educated that Jews are a threat to the country, that many of them are Communists or racketeers, and that Jews are less willing than non-Jews to serve in the armed forces. There is no clear relation either between educational level and the belief that Negroes are less intelligent than whites; this particular stereotype is most prevalent in the middle educational range, among high-school graduates. Findings on the relation between educational level and attitudes toward discrimination are similarly unclear. Thus, more educated than uneducated individuals reject discrimination in such matters as the acceptability of Jewish candidates for high office, the admission of refugees, or the meeting of overt job qualifications. Yet, when asked a more personal question—"If you were an employer hiring a new employee, would it make any difference to you if he were Jewish?"—38 per cent of those with a grade-school education answered "Yes," but 44 per cent of those with a college education—6 per cent more—also answered "Yes."

STEMBER SHOWS THAT the effect of education in reducing discriminatory attitudes with regard to personal issues becomes progressively weaker as the issues become less general, less ideological, and touch upon more intimate relations. Although the college-trained are less prejudiced on most matters concerning personal relations with Jews, they do not look upon marriage with a Jew more favorably than do those who have no college training. Fifty-one per cent of the college-educated stated that having a member of one's family marry a Jew would be considered "a little distasteful." Similarly, education correlates directly and significantly with a willingness to eat with Negroes, but correlates less significantly with a willingness to dance with Negroes, and in regard to attitudes about inter-marriage, the correlation with education all but disappears. (Several studies, however, contain somewhat different findings on this last point.)

It might be argued that though there exists no inverse relation between prejudice and education in general, college education is likely to decrease prejudice in any case. But this is not always so; Stember arrives at the rather discouraging conclusion that college seniors usually are not less prejudiced than freshmen and that the over-all difference between seniors and freshmen in a cross-sectional national survey indicates that the "decreases and increases [in prejudice] just about cancel out; there are seven of the former and eight of the latter."

The author is aware that a number of variables other than education, such as social class, region, religion, political orientation, and the like, are related to the level of prejudice. From most earlier studies, it was impossible to decide if the apparent relation between formal education and degree of prejudice was not due to a *third* factor. After applying all the necessary controls, Stember finds that the educated are indeed *less likely* to hold traditional stereotypes, to favor discriminatory policies, and to reject casual contact with minority-group members; but at the same time, they are *more likely* to "hold certain highly charged and derogatory stereotypes; to favor informal discrimination in some areas of behavior; to reject intimate contacts with minority-group members."

Before discussing the larger implications of these findings, I want to mention two methodological shortcomings of the study. In the first place, Stember has not sufficiently taken into account certain changes which occurred in American society between 1944 and the end of the 50's, even though he does refer to them. Thus, I am doubtful about his decision to use older findings in instances when more recent ones were unavailable. An opinion expressed during the McCarthy period might well differ considerably from a later or earlier attitude; such opinions can hardly be treated as comparable. For a subtler example, Richard Centers found some years ago, that when respondents were asked before the British Labor victory on July 26, 1945, to state the class they belonged to, 51 per cent identified themselves with the working (or lower) class; however, the day the British election results indicated the impressive strength of British Labor, 67 per cent of the respondents identified themselves as members of the working class.

I am also perturbed by the author's use of a number of questions which, to my mind, were so ineptly worded that the resultant answers are meaningless. What is one to make of a question which asks: "Do you think that Jews are different from other people in any way?" And what is one to make of an interpretation which classifies affirmative answers as prejudice? One may grant that such a question for some people might contain certain anti-Semitic connotations. But it is obvious that Jews *are* different in many ways—in their voting patterns, reading habits, and philanthropy, as well as, more obviously, in religious behavior. If the simple identification of groups as having differential characteristics is taken as a sign of prejudice, then practically all social scientists as well as most "men in the street" must be considered prejudiced. The notion that "all people are alike" is a caricature of liberalism, and it should have no place in serious inquiry.

These methodological weaknesses notwithstanding, Stember's monograph is extremely worthwhile. The study clearly documents the fact that, for many purposes, it is misleading to think of prejudice as having but one dimension: education can reduce prejudice in one dimension while increasing

it in others. Thus, education generally reduces traditional provincialism and parochial views about particular minorities; at the same time, it can introduce people to the more fashionable and more "acceptable" types of prejudices which are taken for granted in a "cosmopolitan" milieu. Certain overt kinds of prejudice may be considered a mark of bad breeding in upper-class or college-educated circles, yet new recruits to such circles may learn in them the more covert ways of keeping minorities at a "social distance." The educated "other-directed" men may indeed frown on the blatant prejudices of the unsophisticated "inner-directed" while at the same time being more receptive to the influence of prevailing tides of prejudiced opinion.

Some time ago, Robert K. Merton argued in a seminal paper that "social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in the society to engage in non-conforming rather than in conforming conduct." Merton's argument also applies to prejudice, the rates and types of which do not occur at random but in relation to the social situations in which people are variously placed. Thus, as Stember shows, the effect of education is most marked in reducing prejudice where differences between the sub-cultures of educated and uneducated are the greatest—for example, when by acquiring high education, persons of low socio-economic status in metropolitan areas are distinctly set apart from their previous surroundings. In the upper classes and in the small town, on the other hand, education does not have the same positive effects.

AMERICAN EDUCATIONALISTS, and not only they, too often succumb to a naive "manipulative" optimism concerning education; they believe that by creating an "ideal" environment in the schools, an "ideal" child and the good society will automatically follow. They fail to understand that systems of education are shaped by the demands of society. The effort to eradicate prejudice and discrimination from America requires more than bigger and bigger doses of education; it requires that we change those aspects of our society which "produce" prejudice. If we want to reach to the roots of prejudice, we must ask questions about the quality of life in America.

HONEST THINKING

THE FAITH OF A HERETIC. By WALTER KAUFMANN. Doubleday. 432 pp. \$4.95.

Reviewed by ARTHUR A. COHEN

WALTER KAUFMANN'S latest book, *The Faith of a Heretic*, rests upon two terms much too casually defined by him. Scrutinizing the dictionary definition of "heresy," Professor Kaufmann peels off the various layers of meaning: the theological definition ("any opinion that is contrary to the fundamental doctrines or creed of any particular church") he rejects as absurdly loose; the legal definition ("an offense against Christianity consisting in a denial of some of its essential doctrines, publicly avowed and obstinately maintained") he shows to be the predicament of practically every Christian; finally, the general definition (encompassing any set of opinions "at variance with established or generally received principles") suggests to him that heresy is therefore "the price of all originality and innovation." As to "faith," Professor Kaufmann shows his own to be that of the open believer. Unlike the "true believer," the open believer is dissatisfied with a merely "intense, usually confident, belief that is not based on evidence sufficient to command assent from every reasonable person." Rather he possesses "sufficient interest to concern himself with issues, facts, and arguments that have a vital bearing on what he believes." It follows that there are two types of faith (although Professor Kaufmann adds to the number a modest "at least"): "the faith of the true believer and the faith of a heretic."

Professor Kaufmann's obviously loaded oppositions are unpersuasive—the terms are too crucial to be so arbitrarily dealt with. Clearly, after Eric Hoffer's popular dissection of the true believer, who would want to be a "true believer"? And if one were a "true believer," the likelihood that he would be reading *The Faith of a Heretic* is rather remote. But perhaps Professor Kaufmann believes that thinking people have to be seduced into trying out new ideas, exposing themselves to "novelty and innovation," taking a chance on heresy. Thus he refers repeatedly to conformism of thought, fashionable opinion, fear of creativity, popular

religion, Frommian panaceas, Eisenhower patriotism, and religiosity against which all must guard. But he is aware that if we who read his book are infected, it is not by such vulgar diseases. We have succumbed to others more dangerous—logical analysis and existentialism in philosophy; Bultmann, Niebuhr, Tillich (Barth and Brunner being of an earlier fashion are not discussed) in theology; Camus and Heidegger on death and the absurdities of life; and above all, Christianity, which is, to judge from Kaufmann's pastiche of quotations, the real anti-humanist monstrosity of Western culture.

Professor Kaufmann's faith is therefore to be built upon a series of "heresies," but only heresies of denial, not of affirmation. Indeed, from the dictionary definition quoted by him, one might think that all heresies are heresies of denial. Let me point out that the heretics of history not only opposed established doctrine, but affirmed another doctrine. There have been (at least to this Jewish mind) convincing and congenial heretics, like Pelagius, and unconvincing and uncongenial ones, like Marcion, but common to all heretics of the West is that they have affirmed while denying. The faith of a heretic, if it is to be heresy, must combine significant affirmation with its denial.

Kaufmann does not wish to list articles of faith or construct a system. Premises and assumptions, quiddities and noumena have no place in his scheme of things. For him, the faith of a heretic is founded upon "the will to be honest." It emerges, from his eccentric reading of the history of philosophy, that all the major innovators of Western thought were heretics. The pre-Socratics and Socrates, even Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas (for the reason that a number of his theses were condemned as Averroist), Descartes, not unsurprisingly Spinoza (who was "quite literally a heretic"), Kant, John Stuart Mill, Nietzsche, William James, and Bertrand Russell—all these carefully selected heretics shared in common the fact that they overturned the established, agitated the authorities, dissented from popular tradition. They are heretics because they offended against the opinions held by the mass of mankind. But is this not heresy by majority rule? Would it not therefore have been more fair—and even more fruitful—for Professor Kaufmann to have openly ad-

mitted that for him heresy is essentially a political, not a philosophic, term? His polemic would still be valuable if it succeeded in exposing—as it really does not—our society's biggest and worst intellectual idols, at the same time that it popped away at the obvious demi-gods of the culture. For it seems to me grossly unfair to use Gilbert Ryle's grandiose and admittedly popularized lectures, *The Revolution in Philosophy*, as a take-off against the pretentious, academic, and unrevolutionary condition of philosophizing in our time. There are many less notable, unfashionable thinkers who continue to raise the classic philosophic questions, with all the seriousness of the calling which Kaufmann alleges to be so wholly lacking. His exposure of existential commitment as a betrayal of responsibility, an abnegation of reason, a muddle-headed revolt against the uninvolved life is similarly cavalier and slam-bang.

When Kaufmann comes to theology, his manner of argument is most exasperating of all. He suggests that there are two types of theology, natural and dogmatic; according to him, every theology is denominational and therefore apologetic and defensive. His divisions and characterizations here seem to me not wholly accurate or equal to the sophistication of the best theologians. Far worse, however, is his treatment of the theologians themselves—brutal and not a little arrogant. Let us take his analysis of Rudolf Bultmann. In his *Jesus Christ and Mythology* Bultmann has affirmed: "For modern man the mythological conception of the world, the conceptions of eschatology, of redeemer and of redemption, are over and done with. Is it possible to expect that we shall make a sacrifice of understanding in order to accept what we cannot sincerely consider true—merely because such conceptions are suggested by the Bible?" This real dilemma is contrasted by Bultmann with what he believes to be the serious moral and ethical demands of Jesus. Bultmann then asks, "Shall we retain the ethical teaching of Jesus and abandon his eschatological preaching? Shall we reduce his preaching of the Kingdom of God to the so-called social gospel? Or is there a third possibility? We must ask whether the eschatological preaching and the mythological sayings as a whole contain a still deeper meaning which is con-

cealed under the cover of mythology. If that is so, let us abandon the mythological conceptions precisely because we want to retain their deeper meaning." This method of interpretation Bultmann calls the "de-mythologizing" of the New Testament.

I am not a New Testament scholar, and I agree with much of Professor Kaufmann's sharp and penetrating criticism of Christian theology, but I cannot believe that it is either just or true to suggest that Bultmann's method is an example of intellectual dishonesty. The quotation I have given from Bultmann does not appear in Professor Kaufmann's book; it is in sharp contrast to the two examples—of far less weight, it seems to me—which Kaufmann selects to make his case against Bultmann's "de-mythologizing." It is one thing to say that Bultmann "let the cat out of the bag" when he admitted in his correspondence with Karl Jaspers that he did not believe that Jesus literally returned to life and ascended from the tomb. One should also make clear that Bultmann's admission was marked by profound concern and personal anguish. Similarly, Bultmann, in Kaufmann's second example, chose not to speak of hell and damnation in his *Theology of the New Testament*. Kaufmann considers such a silence to be evidence of dishonesty. But why should Bultmann address himself to problems and solutions he believes to be untrue? Is theology dishonest when it is not orthodox theology? Can a heretic not be a *bona fide* theologian? Theologians, after all, invented heresy. Kaufmann summarizes his two-page discussion of Bultmann's diffidence by saying: "This refusal to let one's No be a No is one of the central characteristics of theologians no less than of committed Communists." This, it seems to me, is both unproved and ungracious.

His own "heretic's faith" is called by Kaufmann "the quest for honesty." What is that honesty—virtue among virtues—which he holds to be the presupposition of all authentic human discourse? It is the virtue which completes his tetrad of virtues (the others are courage, love, and "humbition"), the cause in which the dirty and unpopular business of heretic demolition must be carried on. Honesty, says Kaufmann, is an intellectual virtue, but not exclusively a virtue

of the intellect. It is not a habit—because it cannot be acquired by mere training nor sustained by routine practice; nor is it a permanent dimension of character, because men may be honest about some things, self-deluding about others, and thoroughly dishonest about still others. Honesty is rather a perfection which all men enjoy imperfectly, but to which some men dedicate themselves—in much the same way that religious men may pursue the imitation of God—never imagining that they ever fully succeed in achieving it, but considering the enterprise consuming, worthwhile, and meaningful. Honesty is thus a virtue which requires the courage to persevere. Kaufmann quotes from Wittgenstein: the quality of honesty is most evident in the effort “to think, or *try* to think, really honestly, about your life and other people’s lives. And the trouble is that thinking about these things is *not thrilling*, but often downright nasty. And when it’s nasty, then it’s *most important*.”

It seems to me, nevertheless, that the “honesty” of which Walter Kaufmann speaks and the “dishonesty” of the philosophers and theologians whom he exposes differ in degree. The honesty of Walter Kaufmann consists in pursuing the “dishonesty” of others—in demonstrating that Bultmann’s “demythologizing,” Tillich’s “ultimate concern,” Niebuhr’s radicalism, are really failures to own up to the fact that they have surrendered their faith and no longer believe. On the other hand, Kaufmann is surely not asking that they return to the orthodox beliefs of Christendom—the arduous and demanding faith of Paul, Aquinas, or Martin Luther—or that they save their theology, as does Albert Schweitzer, by choosing to ignore what history discloses to have been the “historical Jesus.” Kaufmann is so successful “a destroying angel” that he leaves to theology—and even to philosophy—the alternative of being impaled either by dishonest orthodoxy or by dishonest pretension to novelty and revolution. Theologians and philosophers are dishonest, in his view, either because they ignore contemporary history in some atavistic return to ancient ways, or try to rescue ancient ways by seeking to establish their contemporaneity. The only attitude which he countenances is that of the “honest” and

unfulfilled quest: to maintain openness without commitment and seriousness without engagement. But this, it seems to me, is to sustain the process of life without any delineation of the end toward which the process moves, to maintain the problem without conviction regarding the nature and content of the problem.

Undoubtedly Kaufmann is right in saying that our society cannot speak of peace when “there is no peace.” On the other hand, it is not enough to announce what has been announced often before. The deceptions and dishonesties are old, though they may take new and contemporary forms. It is no longer enough to be warned. What is needed are thinkers who turn from uprooting the weeds, to the planting. They will undoubtedly grow new weeds, surely take the fatal risk of “dishonesty.” I should say that not the quest for honesty must employ us, but an older quest, the quest for truth. Honesty, it seems to me, is not enough of a substance for even a heretic’s faith.

A PROTRACTED CRISIS

THE STRUGGLE FOR ALGERIA. By JOSEPH KRAFT. Doubleday. 263 pp. \$4.50.

Reviewed by PHILIP WILLIAMS

THE ALGERIAN WAR has passed its seventh anniversary and is approaching a savage climax. After vast concessions from France and minor ones from the nationalists of the FLN an agreed settlement seems more likely than ever before to be reached at the negotiating table, and less likely than ever to be applicable on the ground. For in the coastal cities where the European population lives, the last fragile hopes of an understanding between the communities are fast being submerged by a tidal wave of racial panic and hatred which has overwhelmed not only the regular authorities but the original instigators of violence themselves. In destroying *l'Algérie française* the FLN may find that they have achieved *l'Algérie congolaise*.

Today their leaders know that they can count on the support of the great majority of the Moslem population and that they will soon be ruling Algeria, or at least the greater part of the country. With these new perspectives have come new attitudes: the militant

revolutionaries who displaced the old moderate leadership last August have subsequently tried hard to reassure the European minority, for unless most of the Europeans stay in Algeria for a long transitional period, the independence for which the FLN have fought so long will bring economic chaos and starvation in its wake. But the lesson has been learned very late, and the new leaders, though they are far more secure and self-assured than their predecessors, are unwilling or perhaps unable to offer the safeguards required to calm the fears of a minority exacerbated by seven years of terrorism, and are unable or perhaps unwilling to stop the terrorism itself.

On the other side the Secret Army Organization, the OAS, has won the allegiance of the great majority of the Europeans for the same reasons and by the same methods as their enemies won Moslem support. The menaced and panic-stricken minority see their most effective defenders in these extremists who today threaten and kill Europeans who have tried to maintain friendship with Moslems, just as the FLN for years threatened and killed Moslems who tried to maintain friendship with the French. And even the OAS's instructions go unheeded by the teen-age lynch mobs of Oran and Babel-Oued, which the Secret Army has tried in vain to restrain. Having in their turn won the mass support of their own community, the European extremists are now busily destroying that community's remaining chances—of survival in Algeria itself or of a friendly reception if they must escape to France.

In *The Struggle for Algeria*, Joseph Kraft has admirably described the conflict, and the situation out of which it grew. Half the book deals with the background: twenty-five-thirty pages each are devoted to the economy, social structure, and history of Algeria before the revolt; the politics of the European settlers; those of the Moslem nationalists; those of the French army; and those of the army's political masters in Paris. Then the author gives a full narrative account of the handling of Algerian affairs in the last years of the Fourth Republic; the crisis of May 13, 1958, and the overthrow of the regime; the character and outlook of General de Gaulle and the evolution of his Algerian policy. A final chapter sets the local struggle against the world-wide background of the

rise of the underdeveloped countries and explains all too convincingly why these have been and will remain a festering source of international trouble, and why in consequence the depolarization of political power in the world, the growth of new centers independent of Washington and Moscow, will damage rather than promote the chances of international stability.

IN COMPARISON with another excellent study of the subject published simultaneously in England, by another journalist with long first-hand experience of North Africa (Mr. Edward Behr's *The Algerian Problem*), Mr. Kraft devotes more space to factors external to Algeria itself but bearing on the question, more to the detailed story of events (notably the May 13 affair) but less to the pre-war background and to particular problems such as terrorism and torture, Communist influence, or the present economic state of the country. Written from very similar points of view, the two books supplement one another very conveniently. Any reviewer must however denounce Mr. Kraft's publisher for the omission of an index, and an English sympathizer with Mr. Gaitskill must record his astonishment at the reference to Mendès-France's attempt to reform a "monolithic disciplined party, like Labor in Britain." But the slips are few and trivial, except for the statement that the French Parliament always leaned toward autonomy for Algeria rather than to "integration" of the rebellious province with France; the first Assembly of the Fifth Republic originally had an integrationist majority, and demonstrated the fact in January 1959, though nearly all the 200 Gaullist members obediently followed the General when he later set a different course.

In general Mr. Kraft is a thoroughly reliable as well as a fair-minded guide to this immensely complex problem. He sympathizes with the FLN without being unjust to the French. He makes plain how ruthlessly and successfully the settler leaders sabotaged every attempt from Paris to win over moderate Moslem nationalists—yet he is aware of the strong undercurrent of violence in the nationalist movement and agrees with the settler view that any concession would quickly have become a springboard for new demands. He refers to the savage violence used by both sides, without laying special

stress on it; he gives the army the credit it deserves for intentions which were often progressive, writing of the French officers engaged in rural administration that "while force was present, the dominant motive was social service"; but he also brings out the extraordinary ineptitude of men like the "highly-placed officer on General Salan's staff" who told him, "After Napoleon nationalism swept Europe as it now sweeps Asia and Africa. But one man said No—Metternich; and for a hundred years, trouble ceased. Like Metternich, I say No."

Frenchmen of the right—and of the left too—were long accustomed to claim that Algeria was part of France. The war, as Mr. Kraft says, has stood this old colonialist slogan on its head: "If anything, France has become Algeria." That process has gone even further since he wrote; nowadays OAS supporters bomb the houses of their political opponents from Dunkirk to Tamanrasset. The Moslems to whom de Gaulle on coming

to power promised the status of "first-class citizens" were last October "earnestly requested" by the Paris Prefect of Police to stay indoors after 8 P.M.; when they demonstrated in protest they were viciously repressed and maltreated by a police force never noted for gentleness but which had not hitherto gone in for murder. Fearful of driving the police force into the arms of the OAS, the government covered up—as it had formerly concealed misdeeds of the army for much the same reasons. For while nine-tenths of the French people favor peace in Algeria at almost any price, the remaining tenth, who have some support among the armed forces, are poised to overthrow the fragile structure of a state which President de Gaulle was supposed to have restored in its power and authority. "Except for details," Mr. Kraft could write, "the struggle for Algeria was over." Unhappily, one of the details still to be settled is the fate of democracy in France.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG teaches at Brooklyn College and is the author of *The Vanishing Adolescent*.

ELIE KEDOURIE, the author of *England and the Middle East*, is on the faculty of the London School of Economics.

ELMER BORKLUND is a young literary critic who teaches at Cornell University.

LEWIS A. COSER is a well known sociologist and a veteran contributor of articles and reviews to these pages.

ARTHUR A. COHEN is completing a study of Jewish thought, *The Natural and the Supernatural Jew*, to be published by Pantheon.

PHILIP WILLIAMS, a new contributor from England, writes often on French affairs.

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